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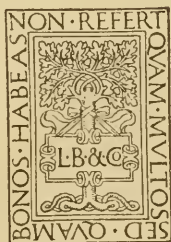
THE CITY

*A MODERN PLAY OF AMERICAN LIFE
IN THREE ACTS*

BY

CLYDE FITCH

∧



BOSTON

LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY

1915

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THE CITY



ACT I. MIDDLEBURG, NEW YORK. *The Library in the
RAND House.*

ACT II. NEW YORK CITY. *The Library in the RAND
House.*

Several Years Later.

ACT III. THE SAME.

A Few Hours Later.

THE PERSONS IN THE PLAY

GEORGE D. RAND.

GEORGE D. RAND, JR.

MRS. RAND.

TERESA RAND.

CICELY RAND.

ALBERT F. VORHEES.

ELEANOR VORHEES.

GEORGE FREDERICK HANNOCK.

DONALD VAN VRANKEN.

SUSAN. *Maidservant in Middleburg.*

JOHN. *The coachman in Middleburg.*

FOOT. *Butler in New York.*



Originally produced at the Lyric Theatre, New
York, December 22, 1909, with the following
cast :

| | |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| George D. Rand | A. H. Stuart |
| George D. Rand, Jr. | Walter Hampden |
| Mrs. Rand | Eva Vincent |
| Teresa Rand | Lucile Watson |
| Cicely Rand | Mary Nash |
| Albert F. Vorhees | George Howell |
| Eleanor Vorhees | Helen Holmes |
| George Frederick Hannock | Tully Marshall |
| Donald Van Vranken | Edward Emery |
| Susan | Jane Gail |
| John | John Jex |
| Foot | Fred Courtenay |



ACT I

SCENE: *At the RANDS'. The library of a substantial house in Middleburg. Front doors open out into the "front hall." It is furnished in a "set" of rosewood furniture, upholstered in brown and red figured velvet. The walls are covered with dark maroon wall-paper, with framed photographs of Thorwaldsen's "Four Seasons," and over the mantel there is an engraving of "Washington Crossing the Delaware." A rocking-chair and an armchair are in front of the grate fire. Lace curtains and heavy curtains are draped back from two French windows that look out on a covered piazza. There are a desk, a bookcase with glass doors, a "centre*

table" on which stands a double, green-shaded "Student's lamp," a few novels, and some magazines. Near the bookcase is a stand holding a "Rogers' Group." There are jars and bowls filled with flowers everywhere.

RAND enters with the New York evening papers, *The Post*, *The Sun*; he half yawns, half sighs with fatigue. He starts to make his arm-chair ready before the fire; stops and goes over to his desk, where he finds a letter which he dislikes, recognizing the handwriting.

RAND. [*Angry.*] Yes, still keeping it up, the young blackguard!

[*He tears the letter in two, and throws it into the fire without reading it. He watches it burn a second, lighting a cigar; then takes his papers, makes himself comfortable in his chair before the fire, and starts to read.*

After a second, MRS. RAND and CICELY, a very pretty girl of about seventeen, enter.

MRS. RAND carries a pitcher of water, scissors, and a newspaper. CICELY has her arms full of yellow tulips and a big bowl.

MRS. RAND. Why, father! Aren't you home early? Teresa's train won't be in for an hour or so yet.

[MRS. RAND, filling the bowl with water, spreads the newspaper on the table; then cuts off the stems, and hands the flowers one by one to CICELY, who arranges them.]

RAND. I felt tired to-day, Molly. My head bothers me!

MRS. RAND. *[Going to him with affection and solicitude.]* Why don't you lie down? *[She lays her hand on his head.]* You haven't any fever. *[She kisses his forehead.]* You're just over-

tired! [*He pats her hand affectionately, and holds it.*] When are you going to give up business entirely, darling, and leave it all to George?

RAND. Never, I'm afraid, dear. [*Letting go her hand.*] I've tried to face the idea, but the idleness appalls me.

CICELY. Mother, have you the scissors?

MRS. RAND. Yes, dear.

[*Joins her, and continues with the flowers.*]

RAND. Besides, *George* is too restless, too discontented yet, for me to trust him with my two banks! He's got the New York bee in his bonnet.

CICELY. [*Glances at her mother before she speaks.*] Oh! We all have that, father,—except you.

RAND. And mother!

CICELY. Humph! Mother's just as bad as the rest of us. Only she's afraid to say so.

[*Smiling.*] Go on, mother, own up you've got villiageitis and cityphobia!

MRS. RAND. [*Smiling.*] I *dare*, only I don't want to bother your father!

RAND. That's the effect of George, — and Teresa. I've noticed all the innuendos in her letters home. Europe's spoiled the girl! The New York school started the idea, but I hoped travel would cure her, and instead —!

MRS. RAND. Wait till you see her. Remember, in spite of letters, what a year may have done for her. Oh, I'm so eager to see her! What a long hour this is!

[*The telephone bell rings out in the hall.* MRS.

RAND *goes out and is heard saying*, "Hello!

Yes, who is it? Oh, is it you, Katherine?"

RAND. [*Reading his paper.*] Who's that talking to your mother?

CICELY. One of Middleburg's Social Queens, Mrs. Mulholland — known in our society as the lady who can wear a décolleté gown, cut in accordance with the Middleburg limit, and not look as if she'd dressed in a hurry and forgotten her collar!

[RAND *laughs*.

MRS. RAND. [*Off stage*.] Really! I should think she was much too old to be so advanced in the styles as that!

CICELY. The flowers are lovely all over the house. Father, you ought to see them! They came from a New York florist. [MRS. RAND *off stage*: "Good-by. See you at five."'] Our man here hadn't anything but ferns and aniline-dyed pinks.

MRS. RAND. [*Reënters*.] Kate Mulholland called up to tell me Mary Carterson's mother-in-

law is visiting her from South Norwalk, and went down street this morning wearing one of those new washtub hats, — and she's sixty, if she isn't over! She was born in 1846, — at least she *used* to be!

RAND. [*Still reading.*] When do you expect your crowd to come this afternoon?

CICELY. Crowd? [*She laughs derisively.*] The only thing that can get a crowd in Middleburg is a fire or a funeral!

MRS. RAND. As we expect Teresa at four, I asked everybody to come in at five. But you know, father, "*everybody*" in Middleburg isn't *many*!

CICELY. Not many — nor *much*!

RAND. You have the best the town affords, and it's good old stock!

CICELY. I'm afraid Tess'll think it's rather

tame for a girl who has been presented at *two European courts*!

MRS. RAND. Yes, I'm afraid she'll find it awfully dull. Don't you think, father, we could go to New York, if only for the winter months?

RAND. Don't tell me *you're* ambitious, too?

MRS. RAND. Well, I've done all, in a social way, a woman can in Middleburg, and I want to do more.

CICELY. You can't tell the difference in Middleburg between a smart afternoon tea and a Mother's Meeting, or a Sunday-school teacher's conclave, or a Lenten Sewing Circle, or a Fair for the Orphan Asylum, or any other like "Event"! It's always the same old people and the same old thing! Oh, Lord, we live in a cemetery!

RAND. Molly, wouldn't you rather be *it* in Middleburg — than *nit* in the City?

MRS. RAND. But with your influence and our friends, — we'd take letters, — I would soon have the position your wife was entitled to in the City, too.

CICELY. I don't care a darn about the position, if I can only have something to do, and something to see! Who wants to smell new-mown hay, if he can breathe in gasoline on Fifth Avenue instead! Think of the theatres! the crowds! *Think of being able to go out on the street and see some one you didn't know even by sight!!*

RAND. [*Laughs, amused.*] Molly! How can *you* deceive yourself? A banker from a small country town would give you about as much position as he could afford to pay for on the West Side, above Fifty-ninth Street.

MRS. RAND. But, *George* said you'd been

asked to join a big corporation in New York, which would make the family's everlasting fortune, and social position beside.

RAND. [*Looks up, angry.*] George had no right telling you that. I told him only in confidence. What is this anyway, — a family conspiracy?

CICELY. No, it is the American legation shut up in Peking, longing for a chance to escape from social starvation.

RAND. [*Thoroughly irritated.*] Now listen! This has got to stop, once and for all! So long as I'm the head of this family, it's going to *keep its head* and not lose it! And our home is *here*, and *will be here*, if to hold it I have to die in harness.

MRS. RAND. [*Going to him affectionately.*] Father, don't be angry! You know *your will is*

law with all of us. And so long as you want it, we'll stay right here.

CICELY. Giving teas to the wallflower brigade, and dinners to the Bible class! And our cotillion favors will be articles appropriate for the missionaries' boxes! Oh, Lord!

RAND. Mother, Cicely has convinced me of *one thing*.

CICELY. [*Delighted.*] Not really! Good! What?

RAND. *You* go to no *finishing school* in *New York*! You get *finished* all you're going to, right here in Middleburg. New York would completely turn your head!

CICELY. Well, don't worry; Middleburg will "*finish*" me all right! Good and strong! Maybe New York would turn your head, but Middleburg turns my —

[*She is going to say "stomach," but her mother interrupts.*

MRS. RAND. Cicely!

[*Enter GEORGE. He is a handsome, clean-cut young American, of about twenty-seven.*

GEORGE. Hello, everybody!

RAND. [*Surprised.*] Hello, George! What's the matter? It's only half past four! Nothing happened in the office?

GEORGE. Nothing! *All day!* That's why I am here. I thought I'd be in good time for Tess; and, so far as missing anything *really doing in the office* is concerned, I could have left at ten this morning — [*adds half aside*] or almost any morning, *in this — our city!*

CICELY. Look out! The word "*city*" is a red rag to a bull with father, to-day! And it's for good in the graveyard! I'm going to dress.

Thank the Lord, I've actually got somebody new to look smart for, if it's only my sister!

[*Yawns and starts to go.*]

RAND. Who's coming to your tea party?

CICELY. [*As she goes out.*] All the names are on the tombstones in the two churchyards, plus Miss Carterson's mother-in-law from South Norwalk!

MRS. RAND. I must dress, too. [*Going over to RAND.*] Dear, aren't you going to change your coat, and help me?

RAND. Oh, Molly, don't ask me to bore myself with your old frumps!

MRS. RAND. *I have to!* And I don't know that I take any more interest than *you* do in what sort of a hat Mary Carterson's mother is wearing! But if it were in New York —

RAND. [*Sneers.*] Stop! I meant what I said — let's drop that!

MRS. RAND. All right, — I didn't say anything!

GEORGE. Look here, father, — mother's right.

RAND. [*Interrupting.*] No, *you* do the "*looking*," George, — and straight *in my eyes*! [*He does so.*] Your mother's wrong, but it isn't *her* fault, — it's *you* children.

MRS. RAND. [*Remonstrating.*] Now, father —

GEORGE. But we're *not children*, and that's the mistake you make! *I'm* twenty-seven.

MRS. RAND. Yes, father, you forget, — George is twenty-seven!

GEORGE. I'm no longer a *boy*!

RAND. Then why did you tell your mother about this offer I had from New York, when I told you it was absolutely *confidential*! And a *man* in business knows what the word "*confidential*" means.

MRS. RAND. It was *my* fault; *I* wormed it out of George!

GEORGE. Nonsense, mother! [*To his father.*] I told, because I thought you needed a good, big hump, and I believed, if all of us put our shoulders to it, we could move you.

RAND. Out of Middleburg?

GEORGE. Yes!

RAND. *Into New York?*

GEORGE. Yes!

RAND. Listen, George, —

GEORGE. [*Going on.*] What position is there for a fellow like me in a hole like this?

[RAND *tries to interrupt.*

MRS. RAND. [*Stops him.*] No, father, let George have his say out!

RAND. All right! Come on, George, we'll have it out now, — but this must *settle it!*

GEORGE. You grew up with this town. You and Middleburg reached your prime together, — so she's good enough for you. Besides, you are *part of it*, so you haven't any point of view, — you're too close!

RAND. What's good enough for your father ought to be good enough for you.

MRS. RAND. That's true, George.

GEORGE. *Grandfather Rand* was a real estate dealer in East Middleburg, with an income of about two thousand a year. I notice *your father's limit* wasn't good enough for you!

RAND. No, but *my* father turned me loose, without a cent, to make my own way! *Your* father will leave you the *richest man in your town*, — with the best established name, with two banks as safe as Gibraltar behind you!

GEORGE. But, I tell you, Middleburg and her

banks are just as picayune to *me*, in comparison with the *City* and a *big career there*, as *East Middleburg and real estate* were to *you* in 1860!

RAND. Good God, how little you know of the struggle and fight *I* went through!

GEORGE. No, sir! Good God —

RAND. [*Interrupting.*] Don't swear before your father. I don't like it!

GEORGE. Well, — what *you* don't realize is that *I* am just starving after a big fight and a big struggle — for even bigger stakes than *you* fought for! I'm my father's own son — [*Going up to him with a sudden impulse of pride and affection, and putting his arm about his shoulder.*] Accept this great city chance, father! There's millions in it, *and no fight!* They're offering the position to you on a gold plate. All I'll ask of you afterward is to launch me. Give me a

start; the rest will be up to me! All I'll ask you to do then is *watch*.

RAND. No, I'm too old now.

MRS. RAND. Now *I* must join in! It's ridiculous you calling yourself too old. Besides, it reflects on me! [*Smiling.*] Men and women of our age in the City dress and act just as young as their children, more or less. *Old age* has gone out of fashion! There's no such thing, except in dull little *country towns*!

GEORGE. Exactly! That's just what stagnation in the small place does for you. Come to the City, father! It'll give you a new lease of life!

RAND. No, I *don't want* to!

GEORGE. I wouldn't have the selfish courage to go on persuading you, if I didn't feel you'd be *glad of it in the end*. And besides, you're *one* against *all the rest* of us, — Mother, Teresa,

Cicely — we're all choking here, dying of exasperation, *dry-rotting* for *not enough to do!*

RAND. Not at all! It's only amusement and excitement you children are after, and you've inoculated your mother with the germ.

MRS. RAND. No! If I'm restless and dissatisfied here, it's my own fault. I sympathize with Teresa having to come back to this, after New York and all Europe. I'm tired, myself, of our humdrum, empty existence. I'm tired of being the leading woman in a society where there's nobody to lead! I'm tired of the narrow point of view here! I'm tired of living to-day on yesterday's news, and wearing styles adapted to what Middleburg will stand for! I sympathize with Cicely. I want her to have a chance with the *real* world — not our expurgated edition! I know what she means when

she says the quiet of the country gets on her nerves! that the birds keep her awake! that she longs for the rest of a cable-car and the lullaby of a motor-bus! Yes, I want the City for myself, but even more for my children, and most of all for George to make a name and career for himself!

RAND. You've all got an exaggerated idea of the importance of the City. This country isn't *made* or run by New York or its half dozen sisters! It's in the smaller towns, — and spread all over the country, — that you find the bone and sinew of the United States!

GEORGE. But for a young man to make a career for himself — I don't mean in business only, — in politics, in —

RAND. [*Interrupting.*] You don't need the City! What's the matter with here?

GEORGE. Look at what Bert Vorhees has done, going to New York! He's going to be District Attorney, they say. And how long has he been there? Five or six years! I had a long talk with Eleanor Vorhees when she was here last month; it's wonderful what Bert's accomplished! And look at Eleanor herself! By George, she's the finest girl I've ever seen!

RAND. Still, did Lincoln need New York? Did Grant? Did a metropolis turn out McKinley, or have anything to do with forming the character and career of Grover Cleveland? You're cheating yourself, if you're honest in your talk with me! All you want of the City is what you can get out of it, — not what you can do for it!

GEORGE. No, you judge from your own point of view! Middleburg makes you look through

the wrong end of the opera-glass. You *can't* judge from *my* point of view.

RAND. When you're *my* age, if you've kept as abreast of the times as I have, you'll be lucky. But if you're in New York, you won't have had time. There, you'll know one thing to perfection — but only one — where your interests are centred! All city men specialize — they have to *get* success, and *keep* it! Every walk in life, there, is a marathon! But the worst of it is, the goal isn't stationary. It's like the horizon, — no man can reach it!

GEORGE. But why blame the City?

RAND. Because the City turns ambition into selfish greed! There, no matter what you get, you want more! And when you've got more, at God knows what price sometimes, it's not enough! There's no such thing as being satis-

fied! First, you want to catch up with your neighbor; then you want to pass him; and then you die disappointed if you haven't left him out of sight!

MRS. RAND. I'm afraid your father's determined. And forty years with him has taught me two things, — first, when he *is* determined, you might just as well realize it in the beginning; and second, in the end you're sure to *be glad he was!*

RAND. Thank you, Molly. And I was never more determined than I am this time.

MRS. RAND. [*With a sigh of half-amused resignation.*] Then I'll go and put on the dress I got in New York, which the dressmaker said I'd made her spoil in order that my neighbors at home shouldn't say I'd gone out of my senses.

[*She exits.*]

GEORGE. Well, father, if *you* won't leave, let me go away! Let me go to the City on my own account. Bert Vorhees has been urging me to come for over a year. He says politics in the City are crying for just such new, clean men as me. He wants me to help *him*; that, in itself, is a big opening. I won't ask for any help from you. Just let me go, as *your father* let *you* go, to work out, myself, my own salvation!

RAND. Your own damnation it would be! No, sir, you stay here as long as I live and have any power over or influence with you.

GEORGE. Suppose *I'm* stubborn as *you* are, and go, even if it has to be against your will.

RAND. Look here, boy! You're trained in my methods, for my job. Those methods are all right for Middleburg, where I'm known and

respected. No one has been to this town more, in a civic way, than I have. The Park Street Congregational Church couldn't have been built, nor halfway supported as it has been, without my help; and I could go on for some length, if I liked, in much the same sort of strain. What *I* do in this town is *right*. But the public libraries of Middleburg wouldn't help me in the City, nor the Park Street Church be a sufficient guarantee for my banking methods, to let me risk myself in the hornet's nest New York is at present.

GEORGE. [*Almost laughing at the idea.*] You don't mean you would be afraid of any investigation —?

RAND. *Here*, no! I've always kept to the right side of the line, but I've kept very close, and the line may be *drawn* differently here. My

conscience is clear, George, but my common sense is a good watch-dog.

[*The MAIDSERVANT enters.*

MAIDSERVANT. Here's a man says he has an appointment with you, sir.

RAND. [*Startled and a little angry.*] No one has an appointment with me!

MAIDSERVANT. Well, I didn't know!

[*Enter HANNOCK, during the speech. The*

MAIDSERVANT *looks a little alarmed at what she has done, as she goes out.*

HANNOCK. [*Very hard.*] I told you, in the letter I sent here to-day, I was going to call this afternoon.

RAND. I destroyed that letter without reading it, — as I have the last half dozen you've sent me.

HANNOCK. That's what made it necessary for me to call in person!

[GEORGE looks from one to the other, dumfounded.]

GEORGE. Father?

RAND. [*To HANNOCK, referring to GEORGE.*]
This is my son. I'm glad he is here, to be a witness. Go ahead! I take it, as you seem to be *in the business*, you've made yourself acquainted with the *law of blackmail*!

HANNOCK. I know what you've already told me — but I don't give a damn! I've got nothing to lose, and nothing to get, except money, from you. *You won't jail me*, anyway, for you know a trial here would ruin *you*, no matter what happened to me!

GEORGE. Here, you —!

RAND. [*Taking a step forward.*] No, George! Keep your temper. This man says I ruined his mother —
[*In great shame and emotion.*]

GEORGE. [*To HANNOCK.*] You *liar*!

HANNOCK. Then why did he give her a regular allowance till she died? and why did he keep on giving to me? — for a while!

RAND. George, I feel badly. Get me some whiskey and water. [*GEORGE hurries out.* RAND, *in rising anger*.:] I kept on giving to you, till I found out you were a sot and a degenerate blackguard — a drug fiend and a moral criminal. I kept on helping you after three houses of correction had handled you, and one prison! *Then I stopped!* What was the use, — money was only helping you on!

HANNOCK. Still, for my mother's sake, you can't let me *starve*! You oughtn't to have torn up those letters; then you'd have had the blackmail in writing. I told you, if you didn't give me what I want, I'd print your letters to my

mother right here in this town. The anti-saloon paper, that hates you for not joining its movement, would be glad to get them and show you up for a God damn whited sepulchre!

RAND. [*Quiet, controlling himself by a terrific effort.*] And suppose that didn't frighten me!

HANNOCK. I've just got on to something bigger yet, I can use by way of a lever! The two years you had me working in the bank, I kept my eyes open. If it hadn't been for the yellow streak in me, I guess I'd have made a banker, all right. I liked it, and I seem to catch on to things sorter by instinct. You were the *big thing*, and I watched and studied your methods to make 'em mine!

RAND. Well?

HANNOCK. Yes! "Well," by God! I guess you realize just as plain as I do that those very

methods in New York, that have been raising hell with the insurance companies and all sorts of corporations, aren't a patch on some of *your deals* I know of! And I tell you, if there should be a State investigation in Middleburg, you'd go under as sure as I stand here; and if I had to go to prison, I'd stand a sure chance of passing you in the yard some day — wearing the same old stripes yourself.

RAND. [*In a paroxysm of rage.*] It's a lie! It's a lie! Just to get money out of me! I told you, before you began, you'd come to blackmail!

[*He chokes.*]

HANNOCK. Well, you know how to prove it! Have me arrested; charge me with it; and *let the whole thing be thrashed out!* [*A second's pause.*] Aw — you don't dare. You know you don't!

[Enter CICELY, looking girlishly lovely in a fresh white dress and corn-colored sash.

CICELY. Father, aren't you going to dress — and help us?

[HANNOCK looks at CICELY, admiring her.

RAND. Excuse me, Cicely, I'm engaged just now.

CICELY. I beg your pardon.

[She goes out.

HANNOCK. [Following her with his eyes.] She's growing into a lovely girl, your daughter! It would be a pity —

[He speaks in broken sentences.

RAND. [Giving in.] How much do you want?

HANNOCK. I want two thousand dollars.

RAND. For how long?

HANNOCK. For as long as it lasts!

RAND. [With a reaction.] No, I won't do it!

You'll gamble, or squander this in some low way, and be back before the week's out! What's the use! I can't keep this up for ever!

HANNOCK. [*Bringing a pistol out of his pocket, quickly.*] Do you see that?

[*He puts it on the desk.*]

RAND. [*Greatly frightened.*] Good God!

HANNOCK. Don't be frightened! It's not for *you*. I'm no murderer! It's for myself.

RAND. [*Suffering from shock.*] How do you mean?

HANNOCK. [*Taking up the pistol, and handling it almost affectionately.*] I'm never without it. And when I can't get anything more out of you, when I'm clean empty, — not a crust, or drink, or drug to be had, — then I'll take this friend to my heart, so —

[*Placing pistol over his heart.*]

RAND. [*Frightened, calls feebly:*] George!

HANNOCK. Oh, not yet! [*Taking pistol from his chest.*] I'm not ready yet. But remember, when you've signed your last check for me, *you will be responsible for this.*

[*He touches the pistol; then hides it quickly in his pocket, as GEORGE enters with whiskey and water.*

GEORGE. I'm sorry to take so long, but I had to persuade mother not to come with me, when she heard you were faint. And I thought you wouldn't want —

RAND. Yes, quite right —

[*He drinks, excitedly, tremblingly, feebly.*

GEORGE. [*To HANNOCK.*] You can see my father is ill; surely, ordinary human feeling will make you realize to-day is no time for you to —

RAND. [*Interrupting.*] It's all right, George. Hannock and I have had it out while you were gone. [*Writing a check.*] We understand each other now!

HANNOCK. I've made my position quite clear to your father.

RAND. [*Giving HANNOCK the check.*] Here — and for God's sake try to behave yourself! [*Looking at him intently, with a strange, almost yearning look, as if he really cared whether HANNOCK behaved himself or not.*] Try to do right!

HANNOCK. Thanks for your advice *and money!*
[*To GEORGE.*] Good-by!

RAND. Good-by!

[*GEORGE only nods his head, looking at HANNOCK with unconcealed dislike. HANNOCK goes out. RAND sinks on his arms, his head falling on the table. GEORGE goes to him in alarm.*]

GEORGE. Father!

RAND. I'm not well. I've felt dizzy all day.
It was more than I could stand!

GEORGE. I don't approve of your giving him money! Till you once take a firm stand, there'll never be any let up.

RAND. But I owe it to him, George! I owe it to him.

GEORGE. Nonsense! What sort of a woman was his mother?

RAND. She was a dressmaker in East Middleburg; hadn't a very good reputation. I doubt very much if what he says is *true*.

GEORGE. *Well then?*

RAND. Yes, but more than he knows *is true*! — and worse!

GEORGE. How do you mean?

RAND. Yes, the whole thing is more than I

can carry any longer! I'm too old! Your younger shoulders must help me bear it, George. It breaks my heart to tell you, and shames me, George, but I must unburden myself. Besides, I need help — I need advice! And besides, you'll see how you can't go away and leave me alone here! [*He rises in fear and excitement.*] I'm your father, and you've got to stand by me and help me! I can't stand alone any longer!

GEORGE. Father!

[*He goes to him.*

RAND. Promise me, George, promise me you won't leave me here! You'll stand by me!

GEORGE. Yes, father, *I promise you!*

RAND. [*Sinks back exhausted into his chair. A second's pause.*] That man who just left here don't know it, but —

[*He stops from dread and shame of finishing.*

GEORGE. But what?

RAND. I'm his father!

GEORGE. [*Astounded.*] That fellow's?

RAND. *That* fellow's!

GEORGE. *Then of course he knows it!*

RAND. No, it would be a stronger lever for money than any he has used, and he doesn't hesitate to use the strongest he can find — or *invent*! In return for the financial arrangement I made with her, his mother swore he should never know. As a matter of fact, she was anxious, for her own sake, to keep it quiet. She moved to Massachusetts, passed herself off as a widow, and married a man named Hannock, there; but he died, and so back she came, passing off this boy, *here*, as Hannock's son! [*He groans.*] What a story for a father to own up to, before a son like you. [*After a second's pause.*]

GEORGE. Don't think of that! *Don't mind me!* After all, I'm a twentieth century son, you know, and *New York at heart!*

RAND. Of course your mother's never dreamed. *That* I couldn't bear —

GEORGE. That's right. Mother's not me, — she's *nineteenth century* and Middleburg!

RAND. Now, you see I do owe this young man something. I can't shut my eyes to it!

GEORGE. Yes. I'm even wondering, father, if you don't owe him — the *truth!*

RAND. No, no, I couldn't trust him with it!

GEORGE. *Still*, father, don't *you owe it to him?* Even more than money! And don't you suppose he suspects it, anyway?

RAND. No, and he *mustn't know*. He'd tell *everybody!* It would be my ruin; and your mother? — break her heart, — and for what good?

GEORGE. [*With a sudden idea.*] Father, why not come to the City and escape him?

RAND. Escape him! He'd follow! That's his hunting ground! When you came back home from college, I'd had him in the bank a couple of years. But I didn't want you two to meet, so I got him a good place in Boston. But in six months he'd lost it, and was mixed up in some scrape in New York! No! Remember, George, you gave me your promise you wouldn't leave me! You'll stay with me here. We must take care of this man, of course, for our own sakes, as well as his. I am his father!

GEORGE. And I'm his brother, and Cicely and Tess are his sisters! It's hard lines on him! I can't help feeling, father, we owe him a good deal.

RAND. You'll stand by me — so long as I live. [*Excitedly.*] Promise me solemnly!

GEORGE. I have promised you, father.

RAND. And, if anything should ever happen to *me*, you'd look after — Hannock, wouldn't you, George?

GEORGE. Yes, father. I consider you — we — owe Hannock a future!

RAND. But you'll keep my secret — promise me that, too!

GEORGE. I give you my word of honor, father.

RAND. [*Half collapses and sways.*] I feel so badly again! I — I'm going to my room to lie down. Don't let them disturb me till supper-time. [*GEORGE goes to help him out. RAND smiles, though with an effort.*] No, no! I'm not so far gone as all that, — not yet a while, boy, not quite yet — !

[*Goes out alone.*]

GEORGE. [*Coming back.*] Who'd have thought it! Who'd have thought it! Father!

[A heavy fall is heard in the hall outside.

GEORGE looks up, and then starts on, but stops and lifts his head suddenly to listen. A look of fright and dread is on his face. Then he turns to the door and walks into the hall. A moment after, off stage, he cries, "Father!"

[The following scene takes place off stage.

MRS. RAND. [In a voice of excitement.] What was it? Father? Did he faint? [Calling.] James! James, bring me water, quick!

GEORGE. I'll telephone for the doctor. I'll get Dr. Hull from across the street. He'll be the quickest. [Passes by the door from Left to Right. The telephone bell is heard. The MAIDSERVANT hurries past the door with water.] Hello. Give me sixteen —

MRS. RAND. [To MAIDSERVANT.] Is John in the kitchen having his supper?

MAIDSERVANT. Yes, ma'am.

GEORGE. Hello?

MRS. RAND. Tell him to come here to help us carry Mr. Rand into the parlor, and you come right back.

MAIDSERVANT. Yes, ma'am.

[She again goes hurriedly past the door from Left to Right, as GEORGE is talking.]

GEORGE. *[At 'phone, off stage.]* Is that you, Dr. Hull? Can you come right over? Father — looks to me like a stroke! Good-by.

[Rings telephone bell, and passes before the door on his way from Right to Left.]

MRS. RAND. I've sent for John. I thought between us we could carry him. *[MAIDSERVANT passes through hall from Right to Left.]* Susan, get a pillow from upstairs, and put it on the sofa in the parlor, and send Miss Cicely.

MAIDSERVANT. Yes, ma'am.

[*Before doorway, JOHN passes from Right to Left.*

GEORGE. Here, John! Father's very ill. John, we want to get him on to the sofa in the parlor.

CICELY. What's the matter? What is it, mother?

MRS. RAND. We don't know ourselves, dear, but we're waiting for Dr. Hull.

GEORGE. You hold his head up, mother. And John — that's right!

MRS. RAND. Give me the pillow, Susan, — help me.

GEORGE. Cicely, go into the library, close the door, and wait for me. As soon as the doctor comes —
[*Front doorbell rings outside.*

MRS. RAND. There he is! Susan, go to the door.

[Enter CICELY. *She closes the door behind her, frightened, and leans against it, listening.*

CICELY. [*Whispers.*] He's dead, — I know it, — he's dead! [*She carefully opens the door on a crack to listen. She sees MAIDSERVANT.*] Susan! [*MAIDSERVANT approaches in the hall beyond the half open door.*] Was it the doctor?

MAIDSERVANT. [*In doorway.*] Yes, Miss.

CICELY. What did he say?

MAIDSERVANT. I don't know, Miss. I didn't go in the room.

JOHN. [*Appearing in the hall.*] Susan!

[*Whispers.*

CICELY. What is it, John? What does the doctor say?

JOHN. [*Embarrassed.*] I — I — don't know, Miss. Mr. George'll tell you. He wants you, Susan, to telephone to his aunt, Mrs. Loring,

and ask her to have word 'phoned round to the guests for this afternoon not to come. You're to say Mr. Rand has been taken suddenly ill, and will she come over at once.

MAIDSERVANT. All right.

[*She goes.*

CICELY. Poor papa! He isn't dead, then?

[*SUSAN is heard ringing the 'phone.*

JOHN. Mr. George'll tell you.

[*He goes off.*

MAIDSERVANT. Hello! Give me thirty-one, please.

[*GEORGE comes into the room to CICELY.*

CICELY. How is he?

GEORGE. Cicely!

CICELY. [*Frightened.*] What?

MAIDSERVANT. [*Heard outside.*] Is that Mrs. Loring, please — this is Susan —

[GEORGE *shuts the hall door; he puts his arm around* CICELY.]

GEORGE. Cicely, father's dead.

CICELY. Oh, George! [Bursts into tears.]

GEORGE. [Putting his arms around her again.]
Cicely, dear, don't cry, little girl! Go upstairs to mother; she wants you. And stay with her till Aunt Nellie comes —

CICELY. [Crying.] Oh, poor mother, poor mother!

[CICELY goes out, leaving door open.]

MAIDSERVANT. [Off stage at the telephone.]
Yes, ma'am. Good-by.

GEORGE. Susan?

MAIDSERVANT. [In the doorway.] Yes, sir?

GEORGE. If any strangers come to the door to ask questions, tell them nothing. Do you know Mr. Straker?

MAIDSERVANT. No, sir.

GEORGE. Well, he's on the evening newspaper here. He's sure to hear we've put off our little party, and come around to find out. If any one asks, never mind who,—you know nothing except that Mr. Rand was taken suddenly sick. That's all. You don't know how, or what it is. You understand?

MAIDSERVANT. Yes, sir.

GEORGE. All right. [*Nods to her to go. She goes out. He walks over to the desk and looks where his father sat and stood.*] Why, it was only a minute ago he was there, talking with me! It doesn't seem possible—that now—he's dead—dead—[*he wipes the tears out of his eyes, and gives a long sigh; sinks in the seat*] gone for good out of this life! I don't understand it! What does it all mean? [*He is star-*

ing straight ahead of him. Suddenly a thought comes to him and takes possession of him.] I know one thing it means for me! — [He rises and stands straight.] It means New York. [There is a tapping on the glass of the window. He doesn't hear it at first. It is TERESA, outside, tapping. She taps again. He looks up and sees her.] Tess!! [He hurries to the window and opens it.] Tess!

[Embraces her enthusiastically.]

TERESA. I thought I'd stroll in and surprise you! It's the same old room! — *[smiling around, as she recognizes things]* not a thing changed! — nor in the town, either, from the smelly old barn of a depot — past the same gay houses with the empty old iron urns, right up to *ours*, — bigger and uglier than all the rest! Nothing's changed! And oh, George, how can I live here?

I'll never be able to stand it! I can't do it!
I know I can't do it!

[*Kisses him again.*]

GEORGE. Tess! You won't have to! We're going to live in New York!

TERESA. George!! What do you mean?

GEORGE. We're going to live in the City!

TERESA. Oh, George! You don't know how much that means to me! I can be married in New York, then!

GEORGE. [*Amazed.*] Married!

TERESA. Sh! That's my surprise! Heavens, how hard it's been to keep it out of my letters! I met him first in Egypt, and then he joined us at Nice, at Paris, and in London, and *there* he proposed.

GEORGE. But who?

TERESA. I just told you!

GEORGE. [*Smiling.*] No, you didn't!

TERESA. Oh! Donald Van Vranken.

GEORGE. Don Van Vranken?

TERESA. Yes! Think what my position will be in New York!

GEORGE. But Tess! He's the fastest fellow going! He's notorious! Look at the scandals that have been more or less public property about him. It's the last one that drove him abroad, afraid of the witness bench!

TERESA. Oh, you can't believe everything you hear! He's a handsome darling, and I love him, and he loves me, — so don't worry!

GEORGE. But I can't help worrying! Your happiness isn't safe with a man like Don Van Vranken.

TERESA. Oh, come, you haven't been away from Middleburg enough! Here, *maybe*, the

husbands do go to the altar like Easter lilies! But in the City, you don't marry a man for what he has or hasn't been; you marry him for what he is and what you hope he's going to be! But I did dread a wedding here — with his people and friends! How in the world did you *persuade father*?

[*A second's pause, as GEORGE suddenly comes back with a terrific shock.*]

GEORGE. Good God! I forgot! I've some awful news!

TERESA. Mother —!

GEORGE. No, — father.

TERESA. What? — not —?

GEORGE. Yes. To-day, — just a little while ago! Suddenly — in a second! His heart gave out — I was talking with him two minutes before.

TERESA. Oh, poor mother! Where is she?
Let me go to her!

GEORGE. She's up in her room.

TERESA. Mother! — [*As she goes out in great distress, she is heard again in the distance.*]
Mother!!

GEORGE. [*Stands where she left him — alone — his head bowed. He straightens up, and lifts his head; and his face flushes with the uncontrolled impulses of youth and ambition. With a voice of suppressed excitement, full of emotion, and with a trembling ring of triumph, he says:*] The
CITY . . . !

THE CURTAIN FALLS

ACT II

SCENE: *Several years later. The library in the RANDS' house in New York. The walls are panelled in light walnut. Two French windows, with the sun shining in, are on the Left. There are small doors, Right and Left Centre, opening into other rooms. Between the bookcases, which occupy most of the wall space, are marble busts, standing in deep niches. There are flowers about. The sofa, chairs, hangings, and cushions are of golden yellow brocade, except one big armchair, upholstered in red, standing in front of the open wood fire. A Sargent portrait is built in over the mantel. A small typewriting table is at one side. Almost in*

the centre of the room, with chairs grouped near it, is a long carved table, with all the desk fittings of a luxurious but busy man; there is also a bunch of violets on it, in a silver goblet — and at present it is strewn with papers, etc.

FOOT *is arranging the fire. There is a knock at the door. HANNOCK enters. He comes in, in evident and only partly suppressed, nervous excitement. He wears a white flower in his buttonhole.*

HANNOCK. Hello, Foot. Is Mr. Rand out?

FOOT. Yes, sir.

[Rises, having finished the fire.]

HANNOCK. He left no message for me?

FOOT. Yes, sir. He left some papers on the desk, which he said he'd like you to go over carefully, at once, and two letters he wanted you to answer.

HANNOCK. All right. Get me a package of

longish papers, with an elastic band around them, in my overcoat in the hall.

FOOT. Yes, sir.

HANNOCK. Has the stenographer been here?

FOOT. Yes, but he's gone; said he couldn't wait any longer, as he has an appointment.

HANNOCK. [*Angry; making nervous, irritable movements.*] He'll be sorry! I'll see to it he loses Mr. Rand's job, that's all, if he don't knuckle down to me!

FOOT. Yes, sir. It's none of my business, but Mr. Rand didn't like your being late. He said you knew it was an important day for him, and he couldn't understand it.

HANNOCK. He'll understand all right when I explain! It's an *important day* for *me* too!

FOOT. [*Eagerly.*] Is he going to get the nomination for governor, sir?

HANNOCK. Nothing surer! — except his election. That'll be a knockout, and then you'll see us both forging ahead.

FOOT. I'm sure I wish you luck, sir.

HANNOCK. Thanks! Oh, yes, I shall tie my fortune up to Mr. Rand's!

FOOT. Yes, sir —

[He goes out.]

HANNOCK. Yes, sir, *[imitating FOOT]* — damned “important” day for me, too! Phew! *[A great sigh, showing he is carrying something big on his mind.]* I wonder just how he'll take it? I wish it was over.

[He goes to the typewriting table, rummages in a drawer, takes out a little box, containing a hypodermic needle, and tries it; then, putting it to his arm just above the wrist, he presses it, half grinning and mumbling to himself, —

looking furtively over his shoulder, fearing an interruption. Just as he finishes, the door opens. CICELY half comes in. She is in hat, gloves, etc.

CICELY. [*Half whispering.*] You're back first. [*He nods, hiding the hypodermic needle.*] I've just this minute come in, and I didn't meet a soul. I've sent for Eleanor Vorhees — she's the best.

[*Enter TERESA hurriedly, in great and angry emotional excitement, pushing past CICELY.*

TERESA. Good morning, Cicely. Where's George?

CICELY. Give it up!

[*Following her in.*

HANNOCK. He'll be in soon, Mrs. Van Vranken. He's an appointment with Mr. Vorhees.

[*Enter FOOT.*

FOOT. I can't find any papers with an elastic band, sir.

HANNOCK. [*Irritated.*] Oh, well, perhaps there wasn't a band! Use your *common sense*! I'll look myself. [*To the ladies.*] Excuse me.

[*Goes out, followed by FOOT.*]

CICELY. What's the matter with you, Tess? Don on the loose again?

TERESA. I don't know and I don't care! I've *left* him.

CICELY. *Left your husband!* — for good? Honest? Or has *he* left you?

TERESA. What do you mean by that? That's a nice thing for my sister to say!

CICELY. My dear! — even donkeys — I mean sisters — have ears, — and you must know how every one has been talking about you and Jimmy Cairns!

TERESA. Well, if I can't depend upon my own family, I don't suppose I can expect my husband to protect me.

CICELY. After all, what can Don say? He can't find any fault with *you*!

TERESA. Exactly! — and I went to him, perfectly calm and reasonable, and said very sweetly: “Don, I'm going to divorce you. We needn't have any disagreeable feeling about it, or any scandal. I will simply bring the divorce, mentioning this woman” —

CICELY. Mrs. Judly?

TERESA. Of course — but doing it as quietly as possible, behind closed doors, or with sealed papers, or whatever they call it. Only, of course he must give me the children!

CICELY. Oh! — and he refused?

TERESA. *Absolutely refuses*, — and to let me get

the divorce as I propose! He will only agree to a legal separation, the children's time to be divided between us. That's all he'll stand for.

CICELY. Let him agree to what he likes! You've got your case, all right. You could prove everything you want to, couldn't you?

TERESA. [*Getting angry.*] Yes, but he — Oh, the beast! — he dares to *threaten*! If I attempt to do this, he'll bring a counter suit, mentioning Mr. Cairns!

CICELY. Tess!

TERESA. You see! He ties my hands!

CICELY. But not if he couldn't —

TERESA. Sh-h! Let's talk about something else. I don't want that horrid Hannock to know anything. I despise him!

CICELY. [*On the defensive.*] I don't know why!

TERESA. Well, I'm not alone in my feelings. I don't know any one who *likes* him.

CICELY. Yes, you do, because *I'm* one.

TERESA. He always affects me like a person who would listen at keyholes!

CICELY. Some day you'll be very sorry you said that. [HANNOCK *reënters*.

HANNOCK. Mr. Vorhees is here with Miss Vorhees.

CICELY. I asked Eleanor to come.

[*She goes out to greet them.*

TERESA. [*To HANNOCK.*] Let me know the minute Mr. Rand comes in.

[*She goes out. HANNOCK takes up letters on desk which are for him to answer, goes to the typewriting table, and sits down to write, reading over to himself one of the letters — mumbling the words. He laughs to himself.*

HANNOCK. Ha! And I suppose he thinks this is legitimate business! — that *this sort of a deal* goes hand in hand with his “clean record,” with his “white politics,” with the Vorhees “good government.” Humph! “Teddy, Jr.” is a good nickname for him, — I guess not! The *public* would put George Rand in the Roosevelt class with a vengeance, wouldn’t they! — if they were on to this one piece of manipulation! Following in father’s footsteps, all right, and going popper one better! That’s what! And he *pretends* to think his methods are on the level! All the same, I guess he is just as square as the rest of ’em. You can’t tell me Vorhees isn’t feathering *his nest* good! You bet *I’m* on to Vorhees! [*He looks up, half startled.*] Damn it, when am I going to stop talking in my sleep when I’m wide awake? [*Looking at the place*

on his arm, and smoothing it over.] Too much of the needle, I guess!

[*Enter SERVANT with VORHEES.* SERVANT
goes out.

VORHEES. Good morning, Hannock.

HANNOCK. Good morning, Mr. Vorhees.
You're ten minutes early for your appointment, sir.

VORHEES. Mr. Rand is generally ready ahead of time. I thought I'd probably find him.

HANNOCK. He isn't here yet. I *hope* he gets the nomination for governor!

VORHEES. Well, I'm inclined to think it's all *up to him* now, Hannock, and that to-day will decide.

HANNOCK. Isn't it wonderful how far he's got in barely five years!

VORHEES. Well, it was Rand's good luck —

to come along at the right psychological moment — the party tired of the political gambler, the manipulator. We wanted a candidate with just the freshness, the force and stability of a *small town's bringing up*. The whole of Middleburg, no matter what the party, will come forward unanimously, and speak for their young fellow townsman. His family is the boast of the place! His father's name stands for everything that's best and finest in public and private life, and, when George took hold in New York, with all the political vitality and straightforward vigor of his blood and bringing up, and not only helped along *our reforms*, but *created new ones of his own*, giving his time and his strength and his money to the public good! Well, you know what the man in the street's been calling him for a year now?

HANNOCK. [*With a covert sneer.*] "Teddy, Jr.!"

VORHEES. Yes, "Teddy, Jr." That idea ought to land him in Albany, all right!

HANNOCK. [*With the bare suggestion of a bully's manner.*] I hope, Mr. Vorhees, I haven't been altogether overlooked in all the enthusiasm.

VORHEES. [*With a big drop.*] How do you mean?

HANNOCK. Well, I've been George Rand's right hand, you know! I've done my share of the work. Where do *I* come in on the *reward* end?

VORHEES. [*Strongly.*] I *really* don't understand you.

HANNOCK. [*Smiling, but serious and determined, and speaking deliberately.*] What do I get out of it?

VORHEES. [*After a pause.*] You get a damned

lot of pride in the man you've had the honor of serving, that's what you get!

HANNOCK. [*Angry at the snub, and suspicious that he is to be thrown down.*] And a hell of a lot of good that'd do me! Look here, Mr. Vorhees, I might as well have my say out now! If George Rand wants to be elected Governor of New York, he and his electors have got to square me!

VORHEES. Why, you talk like a fool — or a scoundrel!

HANNOCK. Well, never mind what I talk *like*; I know what I'm talking *about*, and I say there's something good in the way of a job coming to his confidential secretary out of "Gov." Rand's election!

[VORHEES *half laughs, half sneers, but still is slightly disturbed.* GEORGE *enters.*

GEORGE. Hello! Am I late? Sorry!

VORHEES. No, I'm early. Well!! Can we have our talk?

GEORGE. [*Smiling at himself.*] I believe I'm nervous! Go ahead! Fire your first gun!

[*Takes a chair.* HANNOCK *also sits.*

VORHEES. [*With a glance toward HANNOCK.*] I'll wait, if you have any business to discuss with Mr. Hannock.

GEORGE. No, nothing in a hurry; that's all right, go on —

VORHEES. Well, if you don't mind, I'd like to talk with *you privately*.

GEORGE. Certainly. Would you mind, Hannock, waiting in —

VORHEES. [*Interrupting; to HANNOCK.*] Eleanor's in the drawing-room. Cicely sent for her; wants her advice, I believe, about something or other, *very important!*

[*Guying the latter with a smile.*

GEORGE. Well, suppose you go to my room, Hannock, and use the desk there.

HANNOCK. [*In a hard voice, reluctant to leave them.*] Very good.

[*Rises, takes papers, and starts to go.*]

VORHEES. [*With the tone of a final good-by.*] Good morning, Hannock.

HANNOCK. Good morning, sir. [*Stops at the door.*] If I wanted to speak with you later on to-day, after I've had a talk with Mr. Rand, could I call you up on the 'phone, and make an appointment?

VORHEES. Certainly.

HANNOCK. [*In a satisfied voice.*] Thank you.

[*Goes out.*]

GEORGE. Well?

VORHEES. How do you *feel*? Eager, eh?

GEORGE. That depends on what I'm going to

get! I'm eager, all right, if you've come to tell me what I want to hear!!

VORHEES. You're *warm*, as the children say!

GEORGE. What wouldn't I give — that was honest to give — for this chance, not just to *talk*, not to *boast*, not to *promise*, only —

VORHEES. [*Interrupting him.*] Exactly! That's exactly what we want — the man behind the gun in *front of the gun*! We don't want a Fourth of July orator *only*, in the Capitol! We want a man who'll be *doing something*, George!

GEORGE. [*Enthusiastically.*] Every minute!!

VORHEES. We can hire a human phonograph to do the talking. The party's full of them!

GEORGE. I want to make *my name mean*, in this *whole country*, what *father's* meant in *that small, up-State town we came from*!!

VORHEES. Your name can take care of itself.

Don't think of any glory *you're* going to get!
You'll get most by keeping busy for the good of
the State, for the welfare of the people —

GEORGE. [*Eagerly, not waiting for* VORHEES *to finish.*] I know! But I'm going to show the gods and the demigods, the rabble and the riff-raff, that one good lesson we've learned from the success of the last administration is that the real leader of a party must be its independent choice, and not its tool.

VORHEES. [*Approving.*] Right!

GEORGE. Machine politics are a *back number*.
The public has got on to the engine, and smashed
the works!

VORHEES. Man is greater than a machine,
because God's soul is in him.

GEORGE. Yes, and what I'm going to show is
that the soul of a political party is the uncompromising honesty of its leader.

VORHEES. Don't always be emphasizing the leader; — let it go at the *party's* honesty! You're inclined, George, to over-emphasize the personal side of it! It's E Pluribus *Unum*, not E Pluribus *me-um*!

GEORGE. All right, all right! Only, don't forget that I've got an inordinate ambition, and you're dangling in front of my eyes the talisman that may land me, God knows how high!

VORHEES. Well, come back to earth! Now, I've come here with the nomination in one hand —

[GEORGE *draws a long, excited breath.*

GEORGE. And a *string* in the other?

VORHEES. Yes.

GEORGE. Well, give it to us!

VORHEES. The Committee decided it was up to me! I've known you as a boy. You're going to marry my sister. We're brothers practically.

I can speak frankly, without giving any offence — that's sure, isn't it?

GEORGE. Nothing surer!

VORHEES. It's just this! Of course the minute you're nominated, our political opponents will get busy! The muckrakes are all ready!

GEORGE. You bet they are, and the searchlights haven't any Foolish Virgins in charge of them. They're trimmed, all right, and filled with *gasoline*!

VORHEES. [*Very seriously.*] You can stand it, George?

GEORGE. I can.

VORHEES. You've got a wonderful popularity, and the Committee believes in you, but it wants your word confirming its confidences, — that's all.

GEORGE. That's the least it can ask.

VORHEES. Is there anything in your life that

isn't absolutely above board, George? No skeleton in your heart, or your *cupboard*? It's safe for us to put you up? You're sure not a particle of the mud they'll rake can stick?

GEORGE. Not a particle.

VORHEES. Look back a little. Sometimes I think you're a little *too* cocksure of yourself. No man can be, absolutely, till he's been tried in the furnace, and you haven't been, yet. But we're getting the fires ready! [*Smiles.*] You're all right at heart, I'm sure of it. Nobody in this world believes more in you than *I* do,—[*again smiling*] except, perhaps, you yourself. But there's nothing, nothing that could be ferreted out? You know they'll dig, and dig, and dig!!

GEORGE. But I give you my word of honor, so help me God, I've never done a dishonest or dishonorable act, or an act —

VORHEES. [*Interrupting.*] In business?

GEORGE. [*Hesitates just one moment.*] You know what my father stood for, — and my business methods *he* taught me. I've gone ahead of him, of course, — gone on with the times, — but on the road father blazed for me! I've not deviated from a single principle.

VORHEES. Good! I know what George Rand, Sr., stood for in Middleburg! That's good enough for me. And in your private life? Oh, this is just going through the form; personally, I'd stake my life on your answer, and Eleanor's instinct would have kept her from loving you.

GEORGE. I was brought up in a small town, in the old-fashioned family life that's almost ancient history in the bigger cities. I loved my father and my mother, and their affection meant everything to me. From their influence, I went

under Eleanor's. You needn't have one worry about my private life.

VORHEES. Of course I knew you were clean and above board, but different men have different ideas about some things.

GEORGE. Listen, — I'm no little tin god! I'm as full of faults as the next man, but I'm not afraid to own up my mistakes; I'm not afraid to tell the truth to my own disadvantage; I'm not afraid to stand or fall by my sincere conviction! In a word, I'm game to be put to any test you or the party want to put me, and I'll stand straight as I know how, so long as there's a drop or a breath of life left in me!

VORHEES. Then that's all! And unofficially — *unofficially* — I can tell you, barring the unexpected accident, the nomination is yours!

[*Holding out his hand, he grips GEORGE'S in his.*

GEORGE. *Isn't it great? It's wonderful! Oh, God, if I can only do it big!*

VORHEES. You mean *do it well!*

GEORGE. [*Taken aback only for a second.*] Er — yes, of course — same thing! — Do half I dream of and want to!

VORHEES. [*Smiling.*] Well — I'm taking any bets!!

GEORGE. I owe the whole business to you, you know, and *I* know it!

VORHEES. Nonsense! With that overwhelming ambition of yours! Perhaps I taught you your *primer* of politics, your *grammar* of public life; that's all — except that I'm a *damned proud* teacher!!!

[*Enter* FOOT.]

FOOT. Mr. Van Vranken must see you at once, sir, — says it's very urgent.

GEORGE. All right.

VORHEES. Say in two or three minutes.

FOOT. Yes, sir.

[Goes out.]

VORHEES. There is just one more thing before I can go.

GEORGE. What?

VORHEES. Nothing that really concerns you, though it may cause you some inconvenience. The Committee thinks you'd better get rid of your secretary.

GEORGE. [*Astounded.*] *Hannock?*

VORHEES. Yes, — he's no good!

GEORGE. No good?

VORHEES. A damn rotten specimen. We've found out enough about him to make sure we don't want him mixed up with us in *any way* in the election.

GEORGE. You — you take me off my feet !

VORHEES. If you want more detailed information, ask any detective with tenderloin experience.

GEORGE. I've never liked him. I can't say I've really trusted him. And yet I laid my prejudice to a personal source.

VORHEES. He's dishonest besides. You can't have him in a confidential position. You couldn't help getting tarred with some of his pitch !

GEORGE. But are you sure of what you say ?

VORHEES. Sure ! Why, just now, here, he showed me the hoof of a blackmailer.

GEORGE. [*Looks up quickly.*] *At that again !*

VORHEES. How do you mean "*again*" ?

GEORGE. Explain to *me* what *you* mean.

VORHEES. Oh, he didn't get far — we were interrupted ! He put out a feeler, which was

very like a *demand*, as to what he was going to get out of this election.

GEORGE. [*Carelessly, and not very loudly.*] He needn't think I'm *father*!

VORHEES. [*Not understanding.*] What's that?

GEORGE. You leave Hannock to me. I'll take care of *him*!

VORHEES. You'll *discharge* him? [*A pause.*]

GEORGE. No, — I can't.

VORHEES. [*Astonished.*] How do you mean, — “can't.”

GEORGE. I couldn't turn him out, if he insists on staying.

VORHEES. *Why not?*

GEORGE. [*A short second's pause.*] That I cannot tell you —

VORHEES. Look here, George! What hold has this man got on you?

GEORGE. On me personally, none. But I owe him a certain duty, and in a way he could do harm to —

VORHEES. I thought you said you had no skeleton?

GEORGE. It isn't in *my* closet, but it concerns those that are nearest and dearest to me.

VORHEES. Then you must risk sacrificing them, if you want the position.

GEORGE. I'd have to sacrifice a memory, too, — and I haven't the right!

VORHEES. If I went to the Committee, and said to them, — Rand refuses to dismiss Hannock; doesn't deny he may be a scoundrel; owns up, in fact, that his family is in some way in the man's power; says he himself is not; but still he doesn't dismiss him, — do you believe for a minute the Committee will go on with your nomination?

GEORGE. No! For God's sake don't tell the Committee anything of the sort! Perhaps I can handle Hannock — beg him off!

VORHEES. I don't like the sound of that. There's one thing about you I'm afraid of, George. You're one of those men who think wrong means are justified by right ends; — unsafe and dishonest policy!

GEORGE. I tell you he can't hurt *me*, George Rand —[*after a second*] “Jr.”

VORHEES. That don't do for the Committee. You can't handle mud and not —

GEORGE. [*Interrupting.*] Very well, then if I can't buy him off, I *will* dismiss him! And the others must face the music! There's too much at stake for the future, to over-consider the past.

VORHEES. All right!

[Enter VAN VRANKEN, *excited and angry*;
perhaps he's had a little too much to drink.

VAN VRANKEN. Look here!

GEORGE. Good morning, Don.

VORHEES. Good morning.

GEORGE. I'm very busy now.

VAN VRANKEN. [*With a jeer.*] I won't interrupt you long!

VORHEES. Would you like *me* to hunt up Eleanor and Cicely, and come back later?

VAN VRANKEN. Oh, you might as well stop. You're as good as in the family, now. You'll be sure to be asked to put *your* oar in!

GEORGE. Sit down, Don, and cool off!

VAN VRANKEN. I haven't time. I'm on the way to my lawyer! I understand my wife's here. Has she talked with you?

GEORGE. No. I've been busy with Vorhees.

VAN VRANKEN. I know — the governorship! Well, your sister'll put a spoke in that wheel, if you don't side with *me*!

GEORGE. What do you mean?

VAN VRANKEN. She threatens to take my children from me by bringing a suit for divorce, — mentioning Nellie Jud — Mrs. Judly.

GEORGE. Well, can you blame her?

VAN VRANKEN. It's a pity you haven't gone out, once in a while, into the society that bores you so, and kept your ears open.

GEORGE. What for?

VAN VRANKEN. You'd have heard a whisper, or caught a look that would have kept you from being surprised at what I'm going to tell you.

GEORGE. What?

VAN VRANKEN. If your sister starts a suit against me, bringing in Nellie's — Mrs. Judly's

— name, I'll bring a *counter suit* against her, naming Jim Cairns !

GEORGE. You drunken liar !

[*Going for him.* VORHEES *holds* GEORGE *back.*

VAN VRANKEN. You didn't *know* I could win. I wouldn't put such a stumbling block in the way of my little daughter's happiness !

GEORGE. Liar !!

[*Struggles to free himself.*

VORHEES. No, George ! Even *I've* heard enough to wonder something of it hasn't come your way.

VAN VRANKEN. [*Thickly, whiningly.*] All I ask for is a noiseless, dignified separation, — that's all I want, and God, I want that bad ! Legal or not, as *she* wishes, — only she's got to agree to cut out Cairns. I give her this chance

for my little daughter's sake, — not for hers! But in another day, maybe, it'll be too late. I get my children six months of the year, and she the other six. I ask no more than I give, — that's fair! I'd like my complete freedom as well as she. So far as love goes, it's a pretty even thing between us! And when the children are grown up, and settled in life, she can do what she damn pleases, and good luck to her!

VORHEES. I've heard the gossip, Van Vranken, but you know enough of our world to realize half that gets about, gets about wrong.

GEORGE. Granted Tess has been *foolish*. That's bad *enough*, God knows! Still — I can't *believe* worse than that! *I grew up with her, — I know her!*

VAN VRANKEN. You knew her before she came to New York. She hadn't developed yet,

in that *mudhole* you all lived in! There's no smoke without —

GEORGE. Yes, there is! There's a smoldering that never breaks into a flame! And you know, Don, you've given every reason for Tess's heart to smolder, yes, and burn, too — though I don't believe it. While we're about it, let's finish the whole ugly business here, now. You're a drunkard, and your best friends are the most depraved crew in town, — a crowd that is used individually as markers to tally off each smart scandal that crops up. It never occurred to you, before you married Tess, that you would be faithful to her afterwards; and you didn't disappoint yourself.

VAN VRANKEN. What right had she to be disappointed? I never made any bluff or pose, and you all fought the match! She married me with her eyes open.

GEORGE. You had the glamour of the City about you. Tess was a *real* woman, full of good and bad; she was ready to be what the man she loved would make of her. And, poor girl, she married *you*!

VORHEES. Well, all that's done. What about the present? Van Vranken is right in saying any divorce scandal would endanger your election. We might lose the entire Catholic vote, and the support of the anti-divorce party, — both of which we're banking on. And besides, one of the strongest planks of our platform is the Sanctity of the Home! We're putting you up as the representative of the great section of the country which stands for the Purity of Family Life. We'd have to drop that platform, or be ridiculed off the face of the earth. And it doesn't seem right in any way to me! And it's not up *to you* to suffer for your sister. [To VAN

VRANKEN.] If we persuade Mrs. Van Vranken to a dignified separation such as you want —

VAN VRANKEN. And she gives her promise to call off Cairns —!

GEORGE. [*Quickly.*] Tess will be as anxious to stop gossip, when she hears its extent, as you. I'll take that on *my* shoulders.

[VAN VRANKEN *looks at him, and half smiles cynically at his confidence.*

VORHEES. Very well! Will you, Van Vranken, be willing to hush the whole business up?

VAN VRANKEN. Glad to!

VORHEES. Live on with Mrs. Van Vranken in your house as if nothing had happened?

VAN VRANKEN. No! Not by a damned sight!

VORHEES. Come, don't be a yellow dog! Do all or nothing.

VAN VRANKEN. She left my house of her own

accord, and I've sworn she shall never put her foot in it again.

VORHEES. Oh, well, what's an oath more or less to you! It will be only till after the election! Rand's nomination is practically settled on —

VAN VRANKEN. Oh, I see! Why didn't you say that at first? I've nothing personal against Rand.

VORHEES. I'm sure Mrs. Van Vranken, on her side, will do all she can to protect his interests.

VAN VRANKEN. I suppose I'll have to give in —

VORHEES. *Good!*

GEORGE. I'll see her now, if she's in the house.

VORHEES. [*To VAN VRANKEN.*] I will communicate something to you, after Rand has seen your wife.

VAN VRANKEN. Very good. She took both the children when she left this morning. One child must go back with me now.

VORHEES. *Both must go back*, to-day, and Mrs. Van Vranken, herself, — to live under your roof till after the election.

VAN VRANKEN. That's true! Of course! All right! God, it'll be a *hell* of a life! However, there'll be an end of it to look forward to! Good-by.

VORHEES and GEORGE. Good-by.

[*Enter TERESA and MRS. RAND. MRS. RAND is very altered. Her hair is dressed fashionably, etc., and, instead of the sweet, motherly woman she was, in Act I, she is now a rather overdressed, nervous-looking woman, ultra-smart, but no longer comfortable-looking and happy.*]

TERESA. [*As she enters.*] George!

MRS. RAND. George!

[*They both stop short, as they see VAN VRANKEN.*

He bows to TERESA; she only glares at him.

VAN VRANKEN. [*To MRS. RAND.*] Good morning.

MRS. RAND. [*Looking at him, — outraged and angry.*] You wicked man!

[VAN VRANKEN *is somewhat taken aback; from her, he turns and looks at the two men; he raises his eyebrows, smiles, shrugs his shoulders, and slouches out indifferently.*

VORHEES. I must go, too.

TERESA. Good morning, Bert.

VORHEES. Good morning, Tess. How do you do, Mrs. Rand.

MRS. RAND. I don't know where I am, Bert. I never felt the need of Mr. Rand more than to-day!

GEORGE. Bert, will you have to tell the Committee about this? Won't it queer my nomination?

VORHEES. Not if Tess will do what we expect. I'll leave you to explain to her.

[*Moving to go.*]

GEORGE. No, — stay, Bert!

MRS. RAND. George! Tess couldn't possibly tell you everything she wants to, before Bert.

TERESA. Oh, don't worry, mother. I guess *Don* hasn't left much for me to tell! Besides, Bert's a lawyer. I'd like his advice. [*To GEORGE.*] Don gave you his version, didn't he?

GEORGE. Listen! My whole future is at stake, and it's in *your* hands!

TERESA. Nonsense! My hands are full of my own troubles.

MRS. RAND. [*To nobody in particular, and nobody pays any attention to her.*] What a tragedy!

VORHEES. George is right. His nomination for governor was decided on, this morning, provided he had an open chance. If you make a scandal now, he'll lose the nomination, sure, — and if not, what's worse, the election!

TERESA. You are trying to influence me against what I want to do, through George. I will never live with Don again!

GEORGE. Won't you? Only till after the election?

TERESA. No! I intend to begin proceedings for a divorce to-day.

GEORGE. But Don *offers* you a legal separation, and to share the children.

TERESA. That's done purposely to keep me

tied, so I couldn't marry again! I want the children all the time, and I want my freedom!

GEORGE. But you know what he threatens to do?

TERESA. *He won't dare!*

VORHEES. That's not his reputation in New York.

MRS. RAND. [*At random.*] If she only wouldn't decide at once — all of a sudden. That's where women always slip up!

TERESA. Did he pretend he wanted me to come back?

GEORGE. [*Smiling in spite of himself.*] No, but we persuaded him to be willing.

VORHEES. For George's sake, till after the election, on one condition —

TERESA. [*Quickly.*] *What condition?*

VORHEES. That you agree to the sort of separation he planned.

GEORGE. And promise to put an end, once for all, to the Cairns gossip.

TERESA. Just what I told you! The whole thing with him is only a mean spirit of revenge! He would sacrifice the children and me and everything else, to keep me from being happy with Jim.

GEORGE. [*Surprised at the apparent confession.*]
Do you mean you *do* love Cairns?

TERESA. Yes.

MRS. RAND. [*Breaking in.*] No, she doesn't mean that! She doesn't love him *now*, but she *will*, if she gets her divorce.

GEORGE. [*To TERESA.*] What you really want to divorce Don for, then, is not because of Mrs. Judly, but so you can marry Cairns?

TERESA. Exactly.

VORHEES. [*Looking at his watch.*] I must go.
[*To GEORGE.*] The Committee will be waiting now for me.

MRS. RAND. [*Mortified.*] You've shocked Bert, Tess.

VORHEES. [*Smiling.*] Oh, no, I've a report to make before George's nomination can be official, and I don't see, now, just how I'm going to make that report exactly as I wish.

GEORGE. You mean on account of *Tess*!

TERESA. I'll make any sacrifice I can for George, except my own personal happiness. That, I haven't the right to sacrifice, because that belongs half to some one else.

GEORGE. You go on and call me up by telephone when you get there. I'll have had a longer talk with Tess, and I may have something different to say to you.

VORHEES. All right.

[*Going to* TERESA.]

TERESA. I shall want you for my lawyer, Bert.

VORHEES. Thanks. That isn't exactly in my line, but I hope you won't *need* a lawyer. Do what you can for George, won't you?

TERESA. Of course.

[MRS. RAND *goes out with* VORHEES.]

MRS. RAND. [*As they go out.*] Bert, you mustn't get a wrong impression from what Tess said, will you? She's her father's own daughter, and you know a Rand *couldn't* do a really wrong thing; it's not in the blood.

GEORGE. Now, look here, Tess! On one side is a great career and me, and a dignified life for you, with independence and the happiness and the love and the respect of your children; on the other is probable failure for me, and worse than failure for you. Don't do what he says, and if he wins his suit, you'll lose *both* children and everything else you ought to care about —

TERESA. Except Jim!

GEORGE. Would he make up for any thing?

TERESA. Everything!

GEORGE. Even the children?

TERESA. [*Almost breaking down.*] How can you say that? You know I wouldn't have to give up my children!

GEORGE. Ten chances to one you'd have to.

TERESA. I don't believe any judge would give *Don* the children in preference to *me*.

GEORGE. Believe me, it'll be taking awful chances.

TERESA. All life is that.

[*She turns aside, crying quietly.*]

GEORGE. [*Going over to her.*] Tess! But you don't realize what this nomination means to me — more than anything in the world! I want it with every nerve and sinew in my body,

with every thought in my brain, with every ambition I've got! Just let me get this one big thing in my hands, and nothing *shall stop me!* I'll climb on up the ladder of achievement and fame, and I'll take you all up with me! Remember our boy and girl days, Tess, in Middleburg. We were never selfish, you and I, with each other. It used to be a fight between us as to which should give up! Don't go back on me this time. You've got it in your power to give me a *great boost*, or push the whole scaffolding of my career from under my feet. For the love of God, stand by me to-day!

TERESA. It's your future against my future! Why should you expect me to sacrifice mine for yours? We aren't children now, and this isn't Middleburg! I love you very much, but not in that old-fashioned way.

GEORGE. But has any one in this world the right to absolutely ignore everybody else, and think only of one's self?

TERESA. It sounds to me *exactly* like *what you're doing!*

GEORGE. I suppose I do sound like a selfish brute; but I can't help feeling that what I ask of you, if six for me, is half a dozen for you, too, in the end.

TERESA. If Don'll give me a full divorce, I'll do anything for you — live with the beast *two years*, if necessary, and not see Jim all that time. But don't ask me to give up *Jim* — [*with emotion again*] because I love him, and I won't, I couldn't; if I said I would, I'd lie!

GEORGE. But Don won't give you what you want, and if you insist, he'll do what *he* says — divorce you, with a filthy scandal!

TERESA. The *hour after* the divorce was granted, Jim Cairns and I would be married.

GEORGE. Listen! Would you do *this*? Deceive *me* now?

TERESA. How?

GEORGE. Well — agree to what Don asks —

TERESA. Never!

GEORGE. Wait! After the election, you might change your mind. Whatever course you took then, wouldn't interfere with me.

TERESA. Does that seem to you quite square? Isn't it a good deal like breaking your word?

GEORGE. Has Don done much else beside *break* his since he answered "I will" with you to the Bishop in the chancel?

TERESA. His word was cracked before I knew him! But I wasn't thinking of Don and me.

Aren't you playing a trick on the party that is putting its trust in you?

GEORGE. I don't see it! If your divorce comes out after my election, it needn't affect the party. My acts will be speaking for themselves, then. I intend to be square in office, and to succeed or fail by that standard. I don't mind a failure, *doing the right thing*; what I can't stand is failure *doing nothing* with having had my chance!

TERESA. I see; a sort of the-end-justifying-the-means principle.

GEORGE. Not exactly, because I don't see anything wrong. It's just election tactics! The others'd do it; we must fight them with their weapons.

TERESA. [*Rather cunningly.*] Will you tell Bert Vorhees?

GEORGE. [*After a second's pause.*] No.

TERESA. *That's just what I mean!* It's something father wouldn't do.

GEORGE. He *wouldn't!* Why, father's whole business success was due to his not letting his left hand know what his right hand was after, but to square things in the end by a good division! — *one third* to the left hand on the basis that the *right hand* had done *all the work!* And you know what father's name stood for — the very criterion of business honor!

TERESA. Well, George, suppose I do it. I'm in no position to criticise, any way. I'll go back till you're elected, and pretend I'm going to carry out Don's plan.

GEORGE. Thank you, Tess.

[*But the enthusiasm is gone.*]

TERESA. Only, somehow it doesn't coincide

with my idea of what I *thought* you were being and striving for. Maybe you're on your way up the ladder, but you, at the same time, are coming down from the pedestal I'd put you on, to join me at the bottom of *mine*.

[*There is a moment's pause, both looking straight ahead, not liking to look into each other's eyes. Enter HANNOCK.*

HANNOCK. Excuse me, Mr. Rand. Mr. Vorhees is on the 'phone.

TERESA. [*Quickly, to GEORGE.*] I'll tell him. Then you won't have to *lie*, if he asks any difficult questions.

GEORGE. I wouldn't lie; I'd just beg anything I don't want to answer — and tell Eleanor to be sure and let me see her before she goes.

TERESA. [*Very serious.*] I wonder if *she'd* approve of this little plot of ours? I wish it didn't seem contemptible to me!

GEORGE. [*Hurt and showing a hint of shame for the first time.*] For God's sake, Tess, don't suggest such a thing! Eleanor is the one thing in the world I wouldn't give up to get this election.

[TERESA looks at him meaningly as she goes out.

GEORGE. What did you mean by looking for personal graft out of this election just now, with Mr. Vorhees.

HANNOCK. I was showing my hand, that's all. I was calling the pot! It's time!

GEORGE. You don't know the men you're dealing with!

HANNOCK. [*Looking GEORGE squarely and meaningly in the face.*] I know one of them better than he knows himself!

GEORGE. Listen, Hannock! That day my father died, I promised myself and his memory I'd look after you, and look after you well — not like a dependent on father's charity —

HANNOCK. [*Interrupts.*] Damned unwilling charity — he was *afraid* —

GEORGE. We won't go into the story of your mother — [HANNOCK *winces.*] I've tried to treat you as I would a — brother who was unlucky — somebody I was *glad* to give a hand to —

HANNOCK. [*Interrupting.*] Well, haven't I made good? What complaints have you —

GEORGE. [*Going on.*] You've been of the greatest service to me in every way. There's no question about that! But it's time for us now to open a new pack, and each go his own way —

HANNOCK. [*Thunderstruck.*] What's that you say?

GEORGE. I'm going to offer you a fixed yearly income, — a sum we'll agree on, — and you're to get a job elsewhere, that's all —

HANNOCK. [*Dry and ugly.*] Is it!

GEORGE. What do you say?

HANNOCK. Oh, I've got a hell of a lot to say!

GEORGE. Cut it down to yes or no, and we'll discuss the amount of the income!

HANNOCK. *No!!!* You haven't got to give half of what I expect to get out of the present situation!

GEORGE. [*Angry, but controlled.*] If you don't look out, you'll get *nothing*.

HANNOCK. [*Sneers.*] Pah! Just wait till I begin to open your eyes for you! For instance, how about the New Brunswick deal?

GEORGE. *What about it?* [*On the defensive.*

HANNOCK. As crooked as anything that's ever been in "high finance"!

[*With a sneer.*

GEORGE. What do you mean? You knew

that deal from the very beginning — you knew every step I took in it?

HANNOCK. Yes, *I* did! I notice you kept the transaction pretty quiet from everybody else.

GEORGE. It was nobody else's business. My father taught me that —

HANNOCK. [*Not listening out.*] Yes! — and he taught you a lot of *other* things, too! But you go farther than he would have dared.

GEORGE. That's enough!

HANNOCK. What's the difference between your deal, and the Troy business that sent Pealy to State's Prison?

GEORGE. Every difference!

HANNOCK. [*Triumphantly.*] Is there? *Think* a minute! [*A second's pause.*] You gambled with your partner's money: Pealy gambled with his bank's.

GEORGE. It wasn't my *partner's* money; it was the *firm's*.

HANNOCK. But you were the only one who knew what was being done with it.

GEORGE. My partner got his fair share, didn't he?

HANNOCK. Yes, but you got the *unfair!* You got paid pretty high for your "*influence.*" Nobody else had any chance to sell theirs! If that isn't taking money under false pretences, if it isn't using funds you haven't the right to use, — there was a miscarriage of justice in the Pealy case, that's all.

GEORGE. But —!

HANNOCK. Go over the two deals with *Vorhees*, if you don't believe *me!* Show him the differences between the Brunswick Transaction and the Pealy case, — if he can *see* any!

[Enter ELEANOR, breezily, enthusiastically.]

ELEANOR. Good morning! [*She sees HANNOCK; her manner changes to a cold one.*] Good morning, Mr. Hannock.

HANNOCK. Good morning, Miss Vorhees. Excuse me!

[*He passes MISS VORHEES, and goes out; as he goes, with his back to them, he is seen taking out from his pocket his hypodermic needle, and a small bottle, — and, by then, he is out.* ELEANOR and GEORGE silently follow him with their eyes.

ELEANOR. [*Turning.*] What is it about him?

GEORGE. [*Kisses her.*] You don't like him either?

ELEANOR. I detest him! What Cicely can see in him I —

GEORGE. [*Quietly.*] Cicely?

ELEANOR. Yes, I've come to-day as a go-between — between you and Cicely —

GEORGE. Ha ! Cicely's clever enough to know how to get what she wants from me. She has only to use you —

ELEANOR. She's in love with your secretary.

GEORGE. [*Not taking it in.*] What?

ELEANOR. Cicely and Mr. Hannock are in love with each other —

GEORGE. [*Aghast.*] Impossible —

ELEANOR. I know; I felt the same as you do. I detest him; he's no match for Cicely — I feel instinctively the last man in the world for her.

GEORGE. Even *not* that —

ELEANOR. But Cicely insists. They wish to marry.

GEORGE. Never !

ELEANOR. She guessed you would be against it. She says we none of us like Hannock, and

nobody's fair to him; and so she begged me to persuade you. She asked me to remember how much *I* loved *you*, and what *our* marriage meant to *us*. You see, I couldn't refuse! But I'm afraid I'm not a very good go-between; my heart isn't in it!

GEORGE. [*Hardly hearing* ELEANOR.] It's beyond believing! [*He touches the bell with decision.*] I must talk to Cicely now, before she sees Hannock again.

ELEANOR. Wouldn't it be better without me? She might resent your refusing and giving your reasons before me.

[*Enter* FOOT.]

GEORGE. Ask Miss Cicely to come here at once, please.

FOOT. Yes, sir.

[*He goes out.*]

GEORGE. Perhaps it *would* be better.

ELEANOR. George, it doesn't make any difference to *you* that Hannock has no family or position? Cicely thinks you're prejudiced against him because his mother was a milliner or dress-maker — or something —

GEORGE. Of course that makes no difference to me —

ELEANOR. And you wouldn't be influenced against a man by your personal feeling, where your sister's happiness was concerned, would you? [*He shakes his head.*] If you don't *know* anything against Hannock, you'll let him have a *chance* to prove himself worthy of Cicely, won't you?

GEORGE. Eleanor, it can't be! Don't ask me any questions, but believe me, nothing could make such a thing possible, — personal preju-

dice and any other kind aside! I want you to help me pull Cicely through it. I may even ask you to take Cicely into your house for a while. Would you do this for me? Teresa and Don, you know, would be no comfort, and, on the other hand, would set her a bad example, and fan every little rebellious flame in her!

ELEANOR. Of course, I'll do whatever I possibly can, dear. This is the very sort of thing I want to *share* with you, if I can't take it *entirely* off your shoulders. [Enter CICELY.

CICELY. [*Half defiant, half timid and hopeful.*] Well?

ELEANOR. [*Going. To CICELY, speaking tenderly.*] I won't go home yet. I'll wait for you upstairs.

CICELY. Humph! *Thank* you; I know what *that* means! [ELEANOR goes out.

GEORGE. My dear girl, it isn't possible that you care for Hannock?

CICELY. [*Determined.*] Yes, *very much!*

GEORGE. Well, even that may be, but still not in the way you think.

CICELY. *I love him!* Oh, I knew you'd be against it! Nobody cares for him in this house!

GEORGE. [*Quickly.*] And that's *why* you do! You're *sorry* for him, my dear girl! It's *pity*, not *love!*

CICELY. [*Increasing her resentment and determination.*] Nothing of the sort! He doesn't need my pity in any way.

GEORGE. It's just as I would feel toward a girl who seemed to me to be ignored.

CICELY. Abused! As good as *insulted here*, by everybody!

GEORGE. You *think* so, and your sympathy is aroused, — but that's not love.

CICELY. You don't know what you're talking about!

GEORGE. Yes, I do, — better than you. You've never been in love in your life, and so you mistake something, that is probably like a sisterly affection for this man, for the other thing.

CICELY. *Ridiculous!*

GEORGE. You don't know the difference now —

CICELY. Nonsense!

GEORGE. But you'll realize it some day when the right man comes along —

CICELY. [*Satirically.*] I hope not! It would be awkward, as *I shall be married* to Fred Hannock.

GEORGE. No, you'll never be married to Hannock!

CICELY. *You're* not my father!

GEORGE. But I represent him, and I tell you you must give up this idea —

CICELY. [*Interrupting angrily.*] And I tell you I won't! Good-by!

[*Starting to go.*

GEORGE. Wait a minute. [*Rings bell.*] You can't marry this man. He isn't good enough for you!

CICELY. Humph!

GEORGE. Or for any self-respecting woman to marry, as far as that goes.

CICELY. Your opinion as to whom I shall marry, or not, means absolutely nothing to me.

GEORGE. Very well, I'll go even farther. I'll tell you that, even if both my reasons for disapproving of Hannock were done away with, — still, I say for you to marry him is *impossible*,

and I, as your elder brother, *representing your father*, forbid it. [Enter FOOT.

FOOT. Yes, sir?

GEORGE. Ask Mr. Hannock to come here.

FOOT. Yes, sir. [Goes out.

GEORGE. I shall tell him, *before you*, anything between him and you is absolutely impossible, — that I forbid it, and that he is dismissed from my service.

CICELY. Then I will go with him, if he wants me to. Do you think I'm going to have *him* lose his position and everything *through me*, and not stick to him?

GEORGE. [*With tension.*] *Sorry for him!* That's all it is! *Sorry for him!*

CICELY. *It's not* — and you can forbid now till doomsday. I'm my own mistress, and I shall do as I *darn please!* I shall marry the man

I want to, in spite of you — and the whole family, if necessary, — but I wanted to give you the chance to stand by me — [*Her voice falters, and she turns away; she cries.*] I felt you wouldn't, but I wanted you to, and that's why — I've come here now — and let you — humiliate me — in this — way. I wanted my own brother to sympathize with me, to help me. Everybody will follow your lead!

GEORGE. [*Goes to her, and puts his arms about her.*] Cis! I can't tell you how sorry I am! Not since father died have I felt as I do now. I've nothing to gain or lose except your affection, dear girl, and your happiness, so you can believe me when I say this marriage *can't* be —

[*She pushes his arm away and faces him.*]

CICELY. [*Literal and absolutely unconvinced or frightened.*] Why not?

GEORGE. I *can't* tell you.

CICELY. Well, you know me well enough to realize such reasoning with me is a waste of breath.

GEORGE. [*Suffering.*] I want to *spare* you —

CICELY. *What?* It doesn't seem to me you're *sparing* me much!

GEORGE. But listen — Vorhees just now told me — Hannock isn't on the level, — he isn't *honest!*

CICELY. I won't take Bert Vorhees' word for that! Fred's been your right-hand man here for four years and over. Have you ever found him doing a single dishonest thing? I'm sure you haven't, or you wouldn't have kept him. I don't know why you did *anyway!* It was perfectly evident you didn't like him!

[HANNOCK *enters.*

GEORGE. [*Quickly, before he is fully in the room, and going to the door.*] Hannock, please excuse me. Will you wait one minute in the hall?

HANNOCK. [*In the doorway. He looks questioningly at CICELY. She nods her head.*] Certainly.

[*He goes out.*]

GEORGE. [*Intensely, with his hand on the knob, holding the door closed behind him.*] Listen to me, for God's sake! You're my *sister*, I'm your *brother*. Have I ever showed that I did anything but love you?

CICELY. No, that's why I hoped —

GEORGE. [*Interrupting, almost beside himself.*] *But it can't be!!* Won't you *trust* me, — won't you? Let me tell Hannock, without going any deeper into it, that — you realize the marriage

can't be; that you and he mustn't meet again!

You can say what kind things you —

CICELY. [*Flashing.*] Never!! You ought to know me better than to propose any such thing!

[*She moves toward the door.*]

GEORGE. [*With a movement to stop her.*] For your own sake, for his sake, for mother's, for everybody's — trust me and —

CICELY. [*Looking him directly in the face after a second's silence, speaks with the note of finality.*]

Listen! I married Fred Hannock this morning!

[GEORGE looks at her, his eyes dilating. There is a pause.]

GEORGE. [*In horror.*] What!!

CICELY. I married Fred Hannock half an hour ago. We walked home from the church, separately. He went to his work, and I sent for Eleanor.

GEORGE. [*In a voice of terrible but suppressed rage, goes to the door, throws it open with violence, and calls loudly:*] Come in!

[HANNOCK *enters quietly, expecting a fight or a scene; he is on the defensive and not in any way frightened.*

GEORGE. [*Controlling himself by a big effort.*] Is this *true*, what my sister says, that behind my back you've been making love to her —

CICELY. [*Interrupting him.*] I never said that!

GEORGE. That you've repaid all that I've done for you, and all my father did, by taking advantage of our kindness and your position here to run off with —

CICELY. [*Interrupting.*] I was as anxious to run off as he —

GEORGE. But why wasn't I told? Why do it secretly? [*To HANNOCK.*] Why didn't you go

about it in the square, open way, unless you *knew* you were doing wrong?

HANNOCK. I knew you'd fight it for all you were worth, and I wasn't going to run any risk of losing her!

CICELY. But you wouldn't have! My brother would have wasted his words then, as much as he is now —

HANNOCK. I was afraid — any fool in my place could see how I've really stood in this family. The only friend I had in the house, or who ever came to it, was *she*!

[*With a wave of his hand toward* CICELY.

GEORGE. And that's *why*! Can't you see it? Don't you know the difference between *pity* and *love*?

CICELY. *I love him and he knows it; — don't* you, Fred?

HANNOCK. Yes, *I do know it!* As well as I know your brother only kept me here because —
[*turning to* GEORGE] you were afraid of me!

GEORGE. *Afraid of you?*

HANNOCK. Yes! Do you suppose I didn't guess your father must have told you I was on to him in the bank!

GEORGE. Leave the dead alone! You've got your hands full with the *living!*

HANNOCK. Well, I know my business well enough to realize that once Cicely and I were married, you'd have to make the best of it!

GEORGE. Never! I tell you this marriage is *no* marriage!

[CICELY and HANNOCK *exclaim in derision.*

CICELY. What's the use of talking any more about it? We aren't getting anywhere! It's *done* — and George has *got* to make the best of it!

GEORGE. I tell you it can't be! Will you take my word, Hannock?

HANNOCK. No!

[Laughs loudly.]

GEORGE. Then, I must go ahead without you! You're dismissed. Do you hear? You're *discharged* from my employ!

HANNOCK. [Getting very angry, but controlled.]
You take care!

GEORGE. [Continues determinedly.] You'll leave this house to-day. I'll give you an hour to pack up and get out, and you'll never lay your eyes on this girl again.

CICELY. If he goes now, I'll go with him. I'm his wife!

GEORGE. You *won't* go with him!

HANNOCK. Who'll prevent her?

GEORGE. *I will!*

HANNOCK. [*In a blaze.*] Try it!!

CICELY. I've just promised to love, honor and obey him — and if he says to come, I'll go!

GEORGE. [*Slowly but strongly.*] *He won't say it.*

HANNOCK. I *do* say it! Come on, Cicely! But if you want to come back, you can, because, before I'm through with your brother, I'll get him down on to his knees, begging me to come back, and I won't come *without you!*

GEORGE. [*Going to the door and holding it open.*] Cicely, will you wait in here with Eleanor for a few minutes?

HANNOCK. Oh, we can speak out before her! I want my wife to know the truth about everything! I don't intend to be the goat in this family any longer!

GEORGE. Well, you can tell Cicely, afterward,

what I'm going to tell you, if you like. God keep me from ever having to tell her!

[After a look straight at HANNOCK, he looks at CICELY very seriously. She responds to his look, impressed by it, and turns her eyes to HANNOCK. Neither quite understands, but each feels the depth of seriousness in GEORGE'S attitude.]

HANNOCK. *[Doggedly to CICELY.]* Go on.

CICELY. *[To HANNOCK.]* I'll wait there for you. Don't do anything without me. I'm so sorry my brother takes this attitude! Don't think it can influence *me*, any more than the disgraceful way you've always been treated here has; *nothing* they say can change *me* toward you, Fred! *[She leaves them.]*

GEORGE. I didn't *want to* have to tell you this. I'd rather almost die than have to tell

- Cicely! I must break faith with father, but of course he'd be the first to ask me to. I must dig out a skeleton that is rotting in its closet — that's the trouble! I must do this, and a lot more, if you make me, and give *you* a couple of blows which will come pretty near to knocking you out, if you've anything at all of a man in you. And every bit of it can be spared *everybody*, if you'll go away and let Cicely — divorce you.

HANNOCK. Well, I *won't*!

GEORGE. Because you won't give up Cicely?

HANNOCK. Exactly. I love her better than anything, — money, comfort, happiness, everything you can think of, — so go on, fire your last gun, and let's get through with it! My wife —

GEORGE. [*With excitement.*] She *isn't* your wife! — [HANNOCK *looks at him and sneers.*

GEORGE'S *rage at HANNOCK is only governed by the tragedy of the whole thing.*] Your marriage wasn't any marriage!

HANNOCK. [*A little frightened, and very angry now.*] What do you mean? —

GEORGE. [*Looks towards the door where CICELY has gone, and, with difficulty, manages to control his voice, as he lowers it.*] Cicely is your sister!

HANNOCK. [*With a cry.*] Cicely is what?

GEORGE. Your sister!

HANNOCK. [*Sees "red," and goes nearly mad.*] You're a God damn liar!

GEORGE. It's the truth —

HANNOCK. [*Out of his mind, with an insane laugh.*] You're a liar! [*CICELY, alarmed, opens the door to come in. HANNOCK shouts at her angrily, in an ugly voice.*] You go back! — and shut the door! Do you hear! Get out of this room!

GEORGE. [*Strong, but more kind.*] Wait in the room till I call you.

HANNOCK. [*Brokenly — ugly.*] I don't want her hanging round here now! This is none of her business, none o' hers!

GEORGE. [*Speaks toward the doorway.*] Eleanor, I don't want Cicely to hear what we're saying.

ELEANOR. [*Answering.*] Very good.

[*She is seen shutting the door.*]

HANNOCK. [*Making guttural sounds, and unable to pronounce the words clearly.*] Hugh — hugh — hah! — You'd play any game to get rid of me, wouldn't you? But you can't fool me like that!!

[*He sits in a chair, mumbling to himself incoherently every other minute, working his hands, his mouth and his chin wet with saliva.*]

GEORGE. That day I saw you first, just before he died, my father told me.

HANNOCK. I don't believe it!

GEORGE. He made me promise two things: — that I wouldn't tell you — never! — and that I would look out for you.

HANNOCK. I don't *believe it!*

GEORGE. That's why your mother got her allowance, — and to buy her silence —

HANNOCK. I don't *believe it!*

[*Laughing and weeping.*

GEORGE. Now, you see why you must leave here to-day — leave New York! Why there was no marriage this morning and never can be! Why —

HANNOCK. [*His mind deranged, rises unevenly; he is loud, partly incoherent, and his face is twitching and distorted, his hands clutching and clenching, his whole body wracked and trembling, but still strong, with a nervous madman's strength.*]

It's all a *lie* — to separate Cicely from me!

GEORGE. [*Goes to him and sees the change.*]

Hannock!

HANNOCK. I'll never believe it!

GEORGE. [*Taking him by the shoulder.*] Have you gone out of your mind!

HANNOCK. I'll never give her up!

GEORGE. *What!! I tell you, she's your sister!*

HANNOCK. And I say *I don't believe it!* I love her, she *loves* me. I won't give her up!!

GEORGE. *Yes, you will!!*

HANNOCK. *I won't!* Do you think I'd give her up to some other fellow to hold in his arms! For some other man to *love* and *take care of*!! You're crazy!! She said if I said come, she'd go with me, and I'll say it!!

[*He starts toward the door. GEORGE takes hold of him to stop him from calling her.*]

GEORGE. Wait! If you don't give her up

now, after what I've told you, *and leave here* before she comes out of that room, I'll have to do the only thing left, — *tell her!*

HANNOCK. [*Furious.*] No, you won't! You sha'n't tell her! It isn't *true!* And if it was, by God, she sha'n't know it! It *would separate* us!

GEORGE. [*Horried at what this means, calls sternly and with determination :*] Cicely!

HANNOCK. [*Wildly.*] *Don't you dare to tell her that lie!*

ELEANOR. [*Opening the door.*] You want Cicely to come in?

GEORGE. Yes.

[ELEANOR *turns away from the door, leaving it open behind her.* CICELY *appears, and enters,* — *leaving the door open.*

HANNOCK. There isn't any lie too big for him

to make up to separate us! I'm going! Will you come with me?

CICELY. Of course!

GEORGE. Cicely! Are you strong? Are you brave? You must hear something *unbelievably terrible!*

HANNOCK. [*Holding out his hand beggingly.*]
Come along, don't listen to him!

[*She makes a movement toward HANNOCK.*

GEORGE. You *can't!* [*Taking hold of her.*

CICELY. I *will!* Leave go of me!

[*Struggling desperately.*

GEORGE. [*Puts his arms about her, and holds her in his arms — her back to him.*] My poor child, he's your —

[HANNOCK, *without warning, pulls out a pistol from his hip pocket, and shoots her dead in*

GEORGE'S arms.

ELEANOR. [*Calls, in fright.*] George!!

GEORGE. Cicely! [*He holds her in his arms, and carries her over to sofa. Calls brokenly:*] Cicely!

[ELEANOR enters quickly, and goes to them.

ELEANOR. [*In horror as she sees.*] Oh!

GEORGE. Take her.

[ELEANOR takes CICELY tenderly from him.

HANNOCK. Now, you nor nobody else can separate us!

[*Lifts the pistol to his heart to shoot, feeling for the place he showed in Act I. GEORGE springs forward and gets hold of him and the pistol before he can shoot.*

GEORGE. No! *That's too good for you!* That's too easy! By God, you've got to pay.

[*Enter FOOT in excitement.*

FOOT. Excuse me, sir, I heard —

GEORGE. All right. Telephone for the police.
Is she breathing, Eleanor? [ELEANOR *shakes her head.*] Oh, God!

[*Bowing his head, emotion surges up in him.*

HANNOCK, *in this moment of weakness, almost
frees himself and almost gets hold of the pistol.*

ELEANOR. [*Who is watching, cries out in alarm.*]
George! George, be careful! [GEORGE *pulls
himself together too quickly for him, and prevents*
HANNOCK. FOOT *starts to go. To FOOT:*] Help
me; it won't take you a moment!

GEORGE. No! Foot, I know I can trust you.
[*Giving him the pistol.*] Keep this, yourself, and
don't let him get out of the room.

FOOT. Yes, sir.

[*Takes the pistol, and stands before HANNOCK.*

GEORGE *goes to CICELY, and takes her in his
arms.*

GEORGE. Poor little woman! little sister!
Why did this have to be! I wonder if *this* is
what they call the sins of the fathers?

[*He carries her out of the room, Left, followed by*

ELEANOR. HANNOCK, *the moment they are*
gone, makes a movement. FOOT *at once*
covers him with the pistol.

HANNOCK. Give *me* that pistol!

FOOT. No, sir.

HANNOCK. Name your own *price*!

FOOT. Miss Cicely's life back, sir!

HANNOCK. *You're* against me too, *are* you!
Every one's against *me*!

[GEORGE *comes back.*

GEORGE. [*Taking the pistol from* FOOT.]
Thank you. Now, telephone, and ask them to be
quick, please.

FOOT. Shall I come back, sir?

GEORGE. No, I think this job had better be mine.

[*Looking hard at HANNOCK.*

HANNOCK. [*Quickly.*] I won't try to get away, —I give you my word of honor.

GEORGE. Your word of honor! [*To FOOT.*]
When you've telephoned, go to Miss Vorhees.

FOOT. Yes, sir.

GEORGE. Ask her to keep my mother and Mrs. Van Vranken from coming here.

FOOT. Yes, sir.

[*Goes out.*

HANNOCK. [*Makes a move for GEORGE.*] Give me that gun! [*There is a short struggle. GEORGE breaks from HANNOCK, and, crossing to the table, lays the pistol on it. HANNOCK makes a tricky attempt to get to it quickly, but is caught by GEORGE, who holds him. The following scene takes place*

with GEORGE keeping hold of HANNOCK, who sometimes struggles and sometimes tries to break, suddenly or craftily, away from George's grip, and at other times remains quiescent.] You're a damn fool! Don't you see it's the easiest way all around for us? I've got to die anyway.

GEORGE. But not that way. That's too easy for you!

HANNOCK. Well, it's easier for you, too, with me out of the way! There's no arrest, no trial, no scandal! Nobody'll know I was her brother; nobody'll know about your father! Think what it'll save your mother! Think what it'll save you! Think what it'll save everybody!

GEORGE. Including *you*, — and you don't deserve to be saved *anything*!

HANNOCK. Still, even *I* am your own blood! For God's sake, go on, let me! All you have

to do is to turn your back a minute — it won't take *two*! Please! Think of *her* — what it'll save her memory!

GEORGE. No!

HANNOCK. Then for your mother's sake! How can *she* go through a trial and all *that* means!

GEORGE. Your work in the next room is worse than any trial for her to bear.

HANNOCK. Think of yourself, of the election! What will my trial do to your election?

GEORGE. I'm not thinking of my election now, — I'm thinking of that little, still figure lying in the next room!

HANNOCK. [*Emotionally, almost crying.*] There'd have been two, if you hadn't stopped me! For the love of God, give me the gun —

GEORGE. No! *You've got to sit in the chair!*

HANNOCK. [*With an ugly change.*] Well, you'll

get *your* punishment, too,—don't you forget that!! I know how eaten up with ambition you are! And every single wish nearest to your heart will die just as dead as I do, if you let me go to trial!

GEORGE. What do you think you're doing?

HANNOCK. If I have to pay *my price*, I'll make you pay *yours*. And you'll be dead, publicly and politically, before I go into the condemned cell.

GEORGE. You're crazy, and that's the only thing that may save you, if *Matteawan* is salvation!

HANNOCK. I knew your father was dishonest, and I told him that day; I guess it killed him. And I've watched you, and tempted you, and helped you go on with his methods! Every bit of this will come out in my trial. I'll get a clever enough lawyer to manage *that*! And you'll lose,

not only your ambition, but your position in the world, and one more thing besides, — *the woman you're in love with!* For that kind of a high-browed moral crank wouldn't stand for one half *you* stand for in business, and when she finds out how deceived she's been in you, if I know human nature, she won't have that much love left for you — [*Snapping his fingers.*] And *she'll find out*, and they'll *all know!* — *your party* and the *other party!* That election'll be a hell of a walk-over for the other side!

[ELEANOR enters.]

GEORGE. What is it, Eleanor? I don't want you here.

HANNOCK. [*Half aside, with a half jeer, and a half smile.*] Hah!

ELEANOR. Excuse me. Bert wants you on the telephone. Shall I answer? .

GEORGE. Yes, please. [HANNOCK *begins to steal behind, toward the pistol.*] Does mother know?

ELEANOR. Yes, and she's very plucky. But I'm surprised how full she is of the desire for revenge! [GEORGE *turns and sees HANNOCK, and quickly but quietly intercepts him, and stands with his hand on the pistol.*] She wants Hannock punished! She's watching for the police!

GEORGE. They ought to be here soon, now.

ELEANOR. Teresa is with me. She feels it terribly. [Goes out.]

HANNOCK. Do you realize how completely you'll be done for, if you don't let me do it? The New Brunswick business isn't a patch on some of your other deals I know about!

GEORGE. I've never done a thing in business that couldn't stand the strictest overhauling.

HANNOCK. If you believe that, you're a bigger fool than I thought! *I'd rather be a crook than a fool*, any day! Quick, before she comes from the telephone! Turn your back; walk to the door there! It's easily explained; — you're not to blame!

GEORGE. *No!*

HANNOCK. [*Hysterically.*] If you *don't*, I'll explain now, *before her*, where and how your standard in business is rotten, and your dealings crooked, — and you *can begin to take* your medicine!

GEORGE. I dare you!

[ELEANOR comes back.]

ELEANOR. Bert wants me to tell you it's settled, — your nomination — and he adds, "*good luck!*"

GEORGE. Did you tell him about —?

ELEANOR. No — I — I told him to come here as soon as he could.

GEORGE. All right.

[ELEANOR *starts to go.*

HANNOCK. [*Excitedly.*] Wait a minute, Miss Vorhees!

GEORGE. No, Eleanor, go back, please!

HANNOCK. [*Quickly.*] This man, who thinks he has it on me, is afraid to have you hear the truth about himself. That's why he don't want you to stay.

GEORGE. [*To ELEANOR.*] Stay!

HANNOCK. You think George Rand stands for honesty, and the square deal in the business world! Well, he does, but *it's a lie!* And if he wasn't paying up to the hilt — East, West, North and South — to protect himself, everybody in this country would know what we, on the inside, do!

ELEANOR. George, unless you'd really rather I stayed, I don't want to hear what he has to say about you.

HANNOCK. [*Quickly.*] I don't blame you for not wanting to hear about the suicide of Henry Bodes! [*To GEORGE.*] Do you know who killed Bodes? *You did!*

GEORGE. The man's out of his mind still, Eleanor.

HANNOCK. Am I? Bodes was on to your Copper Pit scheme, and *saw it succeed* — so he tried one like it, and it failed!

GEORGE. Was that *my* fault?

HANNOCK. Yes! It was your example set him on, and do you think your scheme was legitimate?

GEORGE. So help me God, I *do*!

HANNOCK. Then why, when it failed, did Bodes kill himself? He wasn't *broke*! It wasn't

money that drove him to it! It was *shame*, because his scheme was *crooked*, just as yours was. Success covered it, but failure showed it up.

ELEANOR. Don't ask me to listen to this any longer!

[*She goes out. GEORGE watches her go, but*

HANNOCK *only gives a quick glance after her.*

HANNOCK. Bodes was one of your sweet, weak family men, who can't stand on disgrace!

GEORGE. Disgrace!!

HANNOCK. Ask Vorhees, — and about the New Brunswick case! And get him to *tell you the truth!*

GEORGE. [*Half to himself.*] Good God! If there is something in all this?

HANNOCK. What are you paying Elmer Caston ten thousand a year for?

GEORGE. For his legal services!

HANNOCK. Rot! The firm's never used him —

GEORGE. But keeping him on our pay list keeps him from working against us.

HANNOCK. Hush money!

GEORGE. No!

HANNOCK. *Why* were all these Amsterdam tunnel bonds made over to Parker Jennings?

GEORGE. He helped us get the bill passed!

HANNOCK. *Ask Vorhees* if he wouldn't put that down in the expense-book under the name of Blackmail.

GEORGE. No!

HANNOCK. Ask Vorhees!

GEORGE. You can't alter the diplomacy of the business world — calling it by ugly names.

HANNOCK. No, I can't, but *Roosevelt did!*

GEORGE. If you think I'm afraid of what you —

HANNOCK. Oh, come! Stop bluffing! If you don't realize I know what I'm talking about, I'll go on. I know at least *five* separate deals of yours so damned crooked, if any *one* of them were made public you'd be out of business over night, and out of the country, if you know your job. [*He waits. No answer. GEORGE is weighing the truth or the lie of what he is saying. He evidently sees some truth in it.*] And I've got proof of what I say! Every proof! I've got copies of letters and telegrams, when I couldn't get the originals. I've got shorthand reports of private telephone conversations. I've got data enough for fifty trials, if it should come to that. I've been preparing for a deal of my own *with you* ever since I came to you! Only — God! [*He is moved as he thinks of CICELY.*] I didn't think it would be trying to get rid of my life!

I'd planned to make you finance a big game for me!

GEORGE. If what you say is true — and I don't know but what some of it may be, — then it's good-by to everything for me, and it'll be about all I'm worth having come to me.

HANNOCK. That's it! Even Middleburg'll be too small for you, if I show you up! But you know what'll shut my lips tight! Gimme the gun —

GEORGE. [*Quickly.*] No.

HANNOCK. [*Pleadingly.*] You've *everything* to get, and *nothing* to lose by it!

GEORGE. Yes, I have something to lose! — what rag of honor I've got left!

HANNOCK. No! Think a minute — if *I'm* out of the way? There's no real scandal — your father's old story — *our* father's old story —

isn't even known by *your mother*. I shot Cicely, and killed myself, — it's an ordinary story. I was drunk or crazy — she wouldn't have me. Any story you want to make up, and there'll not be a murmur against Cicely, then! But can you see the papers if the *real story comes out!!* All over this country, and all the countries, it'll be telegraphed and pictured and revelled in. It'll even get into the cinematograph shows in Europe — with some low down girl masquerading as Cicely.

GEORGE. Stop! *Stop!*

HANNOCK. And the story will come out, if I go to trial. I'll stop at nothing to take it out of you. Whether you believe or not what I say about your business methods, you take my word for it, my arrest will put a quietus on your election, and *finish you*, not only in a political career, but any old career at all!

GEORGE. What a finish! What a finish of all I hoped to do and be!

HANNOCK. And — you'll lose the woman who's just left this room. Whether all *her brother's* high-browed talk is bunkum or not, even *I* know *hers* is serious; and if she finds you've deceived her all the time, that your high ideals are *fake* — !

GEORGE. [*Interrupts, crying, in an agony half to himself:*] They're not! They're not! God knows, nobody's been more deceived in me than I've been myself!

HANNOCK. Well, you know she won't stand for it. A girl like — her heart couldn't stomach it! Go on, bring me to trial and lose everything you've banked on for a career! Lose your business standing, lose your best friends, lose the woman you want, and raise the rottenest

scandal for your family, for your mother, to bear, and your little sister's memory to go foul under! Do it all, and be damned to you!!

[He falls on his knees with exhaustion.]

GEORGE. My God, how can I?

HANNOCK. *[Whining, pleading.]* All you have to do, to save every mother's son of us, is to let me do what the law'll do anyway! Leave that pistol where I can get it, and walk half a dozen steps away. That's all you need do! *[He sees GEORGE hesitate.]* It's *all* or nothing for you!! It's the finish or the beginning! Are you ready and willing to be down and out, and go through the hell my living'll mean for you? *[He sees GEORGE weaken more.]* You'll be Governor! Sure, you'll marry Miss Vorhees! You'll find all the proofs I told you about in my safety deposit box at the Manhattan. And there'll be only *white*

flowers and pity on the new little grave! It'll be your *chance* to prove by the future that you were made of the right stuff at heart, after all!

[GEORGE *puts down the pistol not far from HANNOCK'S reach, and starts to walk away with a set face — suffering. HANNOCK makes a slow, silent step towards the pistol, but, before he can get it, GEORGE turns and recovers it, with a terrific revulsion of feeling. He seizes the pistol and throws it through the big glass window.*

GEORGE. No! I haven't the right! You must take your punishment as it comes, and I *must take mine!* [*He suddenly breaks down; tears fill his throat and pour from his eyes. HANNOCK is crouching and drivelling on the floor.*] This is my *only chance to show I can be on the level!* That

I can be straight, when it's plain what *is* the right
thing to do! God help me *do it!*

[The door opens and a POLICEMAN enters with

FOOT, *as*

THE CURTAIN FALLS

ACT III

SCENE: *Same room as Act II, only seen from another point of view. The mantel is now Right and the windows Back. Left is the wall not seen before. Later the same day. VORHEES and GEORGE are seated at the desk before a mass of business papers. There is a tall whiskey-and-soda glass, nearly empty, and a plate with the remnants of some sandwiches, beside GEORGE. The shades of the windows are drawn, but it is still daylight. GEORGE looks crushed, mentally and physically, but is calm and immovable. VORHEES looks stern and disappointed. There is a pause; neither men move.*

GEORGE. That's all? [VORHEES nods his head.

GEORGE *drinks, and gathers up the papers.*] What's to be done with these papers? Are they Hannock's or mine?

VORHEES. They have only to do with *your* affairs. Hannock hadn't any right to them! In any case, you don't pretend to deny anything these papers prove. Destroy them!

GEORGE. But —

[Getting up all the papers, except some of his own, which he separates and leaves on the desk.

VORHEES. I doubt if, when it comes to the point, Hannock will go into all this business! He will have had months to cool down, and his hands will be full enough. *[He gives GEORGE a couple of papers he has had in his hand, and motions to the fireplace.]* Here! don't wash your dirty linen; *burn it!*

[GEORGE goes to the fireplace with a mass of papers, and burns them.

GEORGE. [*As the papers burn.*] Has Eleanor gone home?

VORHEES. Yes, but she promised your mother to come back later and stop over-night with her.

GEORGE. I wonder if she'd be willing to see me?

VORHEES. Yes, because I'm sure she didn't believe Hannock.

GEORGE. Tess can stay with mother. There'll be no need of her pretending to go back to Don, now.

VORHEES. *Pretending!*

GEORGE. Yes. That's something else I did, — persuaded Tess to make Don believe she'd come back in accordance with his conditions. But it was agreed between us she was to break her word to him, *after the election!*

[He burns his last batch of papers.]

VORHEES. It's a pity you can't burn that, too! I'd have staked my reputation on your being

absolutely on the level! How I have been taken in by you!

GEORGE. I know, it sounds ridiculous, and I don't expect you to understand it; but I've been taken in by myself, too! Shall I write my withdrawal from the nomination, or will you take a verbal message?

VORHEES. Write it. It will make less for me to say by way of explanation. [GEORGE goes to the desk and writes.] I'm sorry, I'm sorry, George. I *know* what it means to you!

GEORGE. Somehow now, it doesn't seem so much, after all; I suppose that's Cicely — poor little girl — poor little girl, — and — Eleanor.

[*He adds the last, almost in a whisper.*]

VORHEES. You're a *young* man, George! You've got a good chance yet to make good, and it's all up to you!

GEORGE. I know that —

VORHEES. I suppose you won't want to go back to Middleburg?

GEORGE. No! No!! For everybody's sake! But, *would it have* been wrong — leave *me out of it*, — to have saved *father's memory*, to have saved mother — could I have let him do it?

VORHEES. You know you couldn't!

GEORGE. Yes, and anyway, I didn't. Why can't I forget it!

VORHEES. Oh, it'll be many a day before you *deserve* to forget it!

GEORGE. But, will *you* ever have any confidence in me? Can any one ever believe in me again?

[*Buries his face in his hands, and groans.*]

VORHEES. *I can.* Whether I *do* or not, is entirely up to you.

GEORGE. You're sure of that?

VORHEES. [*Takes his hand and shakes it.*]

Sure.

GEORGE. And Eleanor?

VORHEES. Well — there's no use in my lying about it. If I know her, you must give up all idea of marrying her. Eleanor's husband must be a man she can *look up* to. That's a necessity of her nature — she can't help it. But I *do* believe she'll *help you* with *her friendship*. If you don't go back to Middleburg, where will you go?

GEORGE. Here! I stay *right here*!

VORHEES. [*Surprised.*] Here! It'll be *hard*.

GEORGE. I suppose it will!

VORHEES. How will you start?

GEORGE. First, make a clean breast to my partners! Give back all the money I've made

in ways which you've proved to me are illegal. Publish every form of graft I've benefited by, for the sake of future protection! Resign from all —

VORHEES. It's gigantic! It's colossal! *Can* you *do* it?

GEORGE. [*Simply.*] I can try. I'm going to have a go at it, anyway!

VORHEES. The Press! Among your professional associates — here and all over the State — it'll be hell for you to go through!

GEORGE. I know it! I know it! But to get back where I want to be — if I ever can! I've got to fight it out right here, and make good *here*, or not at all. I don't care what it costs me!

TERESA. [*Opening the door.*] May I come in?

GEORGE. Yes, come in, Tess. Where's mother?

TERESA. She's locked herself in her room!

She's *turned against me* in the most extraordinary manner! Says my influence over Cicely is at the bottom of everything! [*She begins to cry.*] She goes so far as to say, if I'd behaved like a decent woman, she doesn't believe this would have happened! I didn't care what other people believe of me, but this I didn't bargain for! I have been unfaithful to Don in my heart — and in my mind, perhaps, — but that's all —

GEORGE. I always felt it, Tess!

TERESA. Can't you persuade mother?

GEORGE. *Bert could*, because he represents the outside world.

TERESA. But you know Bert. He wouldn't persuade her, unless he believed in me himself.

VORHEES. That's true, and I'll go talk with her now, if Mrs. Rand will see me.

[*He goes toward door.*]

TERESA. [*Deeply moved, and grateful.*] Thank you!

VORHEES. That's all right.

[*He goes out.*]

TERESA. George, I don't know — but everything, even Jimmy Cairns, seems so little now, in comparison with *Cicely* — *dead*, — the bottom fallen out of everything!

GEORGE. Even worse than that, for me. I've given up the nomination.

TERESA. I'm sorry! Did Bert feel you had to?

GEORGE. No more than I did. You won't have to act a lie for me after all, Tess.

TERESA. I'm glad! I know, if Eleanor Vorhees knew I was doing it —

GEORGE. She's going to know it, — and that I'm a liar! She's going to know much worse things than that! Everybody's going to know

them, I guess! Father was a crook in business, — that's the ugly, unvarnished fact, — and I've been a worse one! But I'd rather she'd learn these things from me, — what Hannock hasn't already told her — rather than she learned them outside.

TERESA. But George! George!! Don't you realize you'll lose her?

GEORGE. Well, I've lost everything else, except —

TERESA. Except what?

GEORGE. Except that! After all, I don't believe, way down at the bottom, I'm not fundamentally straight! I mean to give myself, all by myself, a chance to prove it! I know there are lots of "good men" who are born crooks. I want to see if I'm not a crook who was born good!

[VORHEES *reënters*.

VORHEES. It's all right. They've told Mrs. Rand she can go in and see Cicely now, and she wants you to go with her.

TERESA. [*Holds his hand in her two, for a moment.*] Thank you! [*She goes out.*]

VORHEES. And give me that paper you wrote. The sooner we get that off our hands, the better.

[GEORGE *takes up the paper and, reading it over to himself, goes slowly to* VORHEES, *and gives it to him.*]

VORHEES. Too bad, old man, too bad! But it *can't* be helped.

GEORGE. I know! [VORHEES *starts to go.*]
Bert, — Eleanor hasn't come yet?

VORHEES. No. Are you sure you want to see her, or shall I first —

GEORGE. No, leave it to me! I'd rather. I don't want a loophole, anywhere, for her think-

ing me a coward. I want to make a clean breast of it all! That's what I'm after, — a clean breast, no matter what the doing it costs me!

VORHEES. You're right.

[*About to go. Enter FOOT.*

FOOT. A gentleman for a newspaper, sir.

GEORGE. Will you see him, Bert?

VORHEES. Yes. [*To FOOT.*] You refer all the reporters to me. You know my address?

FOOT. Yes, sir.

VORHEES. [*To FOOT.*] Say no one here can be seen. [*To GEORGE.*] I'll see you early tomorrow.

GEORGE. Thank you. I'd like your help in laying out a plan of action. Of course I shan't do anything till after —

[*He hesitates, and raises his head and eyes to upstairs.*

VORHEES. I wouldn't.

[*Goes out. FOOT exits. GEORGE stands alone in the room, a picture of utter dejection, of ruin and sorrow, but with a bulldog look all the while, — the look of a man who is licked, beaten, but not dead yet. He stands immovable almost — in complete silence. Slowly and softly, the door opens. VAN VRANKEN looks in. He speaks in a sullen, hushed, and somewhat awed voice. He is pale ; all evidence of drinking and excitement are gone.*

VAN VRANKEN. George?

GEORGE. [*In a monotonous voice.*] Hello, Don — you know?

VAN VRANKEN. I just heard. It's true?
[*GEORGE, with a set face and stern lips, nods his head firmly, still standing. VAN VRANKEN collapses in a chair.*] God! Poor Cicely!

GEORGE. Tough, isn't it?

[*With a great sigh.*]

VAN VRANKEN. I was having an awful time, George, with Mrs. Judly. She was giving it to me good for being willing to patch it up, temporarily, with Tess! She *didn't care about you!* I've come to the conclusion she don't care about anybody, anyway, but herself. Her brother telephoned it from his Club, and *she* — [*his anger rises*] had the rottenness to say she believed there was something between Hannock and Cicely. That was more than I could stand for! God knows I'm as bad as they make them, but, with that little girl dead like that — to think such a thing, let alone say it — I don't know! — It took it out of me, somehow! It didn't seem to me it was the time to have a low quarrel between two people like us! It made

us seem so beastly small! Death's such an awful — such a big — I suppose I'll feel differently to-morrow — but to-day — now — George, I *couldn't* stand for it! She kicked me out, and I give you my word of honor I'm glad she did!

GEORGE. [*Not deeply impressed, but civil.*] As you say, you'll feel differently to-morrow.

VAN VRANKEN. Very likely! Still, I've got these few decent hours, anyway, to put on your sister's grave.

[*A pause.* GEORGE *sits.*

GEORGE. I've given up running for governor.

VAN VRANKEN. [*Surprised.*] Because —?

GEORGE. No. You'll hear all the reasons soon enough. The point for the moment is, you and Tess needn't fake any further — living together.

VAN VRANKEN. [*Thoughtfully.*] I see. [*After a pause.*] George —?

GEORGE. What?

VAN VRANKEN. Could I see Cicely?

GEORGE. [*Hesitating.*] Tess is there.

VAN VRANKEN. [*After a moment.*] Then, perhaps I'd better not go —?

GEORGE. I think I *would*, if I were you.

[VAN VRANKEN *looks at* GEORGE *questioningly*.

TERESA *enters*.

TERESA. [*Quietly.*] Don —

[*Her voice fills; she turns aside, and hastily wipes her eyes.*

VAN VRANKEN. [*Moved.*] I was going upstairs.

TERESA. Not now! Mother and I have just left. They've come to —

[*She stops, and again turns aside.*

VAN VRANKEN. Where are the children?

TERESA. Home!

VAN VRANKEN. "Home"?

[*Very meaningly.*

TERESA. At the house.

VAN VRANKEN. Oh, Tess! — I'm — I'm not fit to take care of them! You'd better take them both, Tess, but let me see them off and on —

TERESA. I'm going back now with you, Don.

VAN VRANKEN. You needn't. I take it all back, Tess. You can have it your own way entirely. Leave Mrs. Judly out of it, — that's all I'll ask. Outside that, I'll fix it easy for you.

TERESA. Thank you, Don, [*after a second's pause*] but, if you don't mind, I'd rather go back with you for the present, anyway. It seems to me, between us, we've pretty well spoiled everything except — well, — perhaps, in thinking of the children's happiness we might find something for ourselves! What do you say?

VAN VRANKEN. It's worth a try — so long as you're willing!

[Enter MRS. RAND in a flurry.]

MRS. RAND. Has any one thought to send for a dressmaker? [*Nobody answers.*] Did you think of it, Teresa?

TERESA. No, I'm afraid I didn't.

MRS. RAND. [*Her eyes filling.*] I haven't the remotest idea what's the thing to wear! In Middleburg, I'd have known, — but here, I'm always wrong! If I'd had my way, I'd never have taken off my crêpe veil for your father, and now *I wish I hadn't!* [*She sees DON.*] Oh! I didn't see you, Don. Have you come to beg Tess's pardon? Has this terrible thing reformed you?

VAN VRANKEN. I don't know, mother, how much reform is possible, but I came to tell Tess I'm ashamed —

[*He and TERESA exchange a look of almost sympathy, — at least, all antagonism has gone from them.*]

MRS. RAND. I confess, if I were Tess I could never forgive you! *Her father* spoiled me for that sort of thing!

GEORGE. Tess isn't thinking now only of herself.

MRS. RAND. Oh, why did we ever come here! That was the first and *great mistake!* I haven't had a happy moment since I left their father's and my old home!

TERESA. Mother! Mother!!

MRS. RAND. It's the truth, — I haven't! I've never been anything, in New York, but a fizzle! I've been snubbed right and left by the people I wanted to know! I'm lonesome for my church, and if I died I wouldn't have a handful of people at my funeral!

GEORGE. But you're going to *live*, mother, and you'll see we'll make you happy yet!

MRS. RAND. Not here! You can't do it yourself! Bert says you have given up running for governor, and Tess says everything's off between you and Eleanor. I don't have to be told how disappointed and unhappy you are, and Tess's made a miserable mess of it! And now, Cicely, the baby of you all! — killed, like this! [*She breaks down into hysterical sobbing.*] It's more than I can bear! I tell you, children, I can't bear it! And it's all thanks to coming *here*!! This is what we get for not doing what your father wished. Why didn't we stay home? I amounted to something there. I had as much sense as my neighbors. I could hold my own! Here, I've been made to understand I was such a nonentity — that I've grown

actually to be the fool they believe me! Oh, what the City has done for the whole of us!

TERESA. Yes, you're right, mother. I was happy too, till I came here. It was the City that taught me to make the worst of things, instead of the best of them.

GEORGE. [*Gently.*] No, Tess — let's be honest with ourselves to-day. After all, it's our own fault —

VAN VRANKEN. I agree with Tess! She and I, in a small town, would have been happy always! I'd not have been tempted like I am here — I couldn't have had the chances —

GEORGE. [*Rising and speaking with the fullness of conviction.*] No! You're all wrong! Don't blame the City. It's not her fault! It's our own! What the City does is to bring out what's strongest in us. If at heart we're

good, the good in us will win! If the bad is strongest, God help us! Don't blame the City! *She* gives the man his opportunity; it is up to *him* what he makes of it! A man can live in a small town all his life, and deceive the whole place and *himself* into thinking he's got all the virtues, when at heart he's a hypocrite! But the village gives him no chance to find it out, to prove it to his fellows — the small town is too easy! *But the City!!!* A man goes to the gates of the City and knocks! — New York or Chicago, Boston or San Francisco, no matter *what* city so long as it's big, and busy, and selfish, and self-centred. And she comes to her gates and takes him in, and she stands him in the middle of her market place — where Wall Street and Herald Square and Fifth Avenue and the Bowery, and Harlem, and Forty-second Street all meet, and there she strips him naked of all his disguises

— and all his hypocrisies, — and she paints his ambition on her fences, and lights up her sky-scrapers with it! — what *he wants* to be and *what he thinks he is!* — and then she says to him, Make good if you can, or to Hell with you! And what is in him comes out to clothe his nakedness, and to the City he can't lie! *I know*, because *I tried!*

[*A short pause.* FOOT enters.]

FOOT. Miss Vorhees.

GEORGE. Ask her to come in here.

[TERESA rises quickly.]

TERESA. Don, I think —

VAN VRANKEN. I've a taxi outside.

MRS. RAND. All this time, and that clock going on every minute!

TERESA. [*To* MRS. RAND.] Mother, if you want to see us after dinner, telephone.

[*Kisses her.*]

MRS. RAND. What about our clothes?

TERESA. I'll attend to everything in the morning.

[TERESA and DON go out together.]

MRS. RAND. I think I'd rather be alone with you, George, to-night, if the things are off between you and Eleanor. At a time like this, there is no excuse for her going back on you —

GEORGE. Hush, mother! You don't understand. She has every excuse. I'll tell you about it afterward.

MRS. RAND. No, tell her for me not to stop. I wanted her, because I thought she loved you — and was to be one of us — that's all! [*Enter ELEANOR.*] Thank you for coming back, Eleanor, but good night. George will explain.

[*She goes out.*]

ELEANOR. What is the matter with your

mother? and Teresa? And Bert seemed strange, too, when I met him outside. What have I done?

GEORGE. Nothing, Eleanor.

ELEANOR. [*Realizing what it may mean.*] They think I believed what Hannock said? That anything he would say against *you* could for *one* moment mean anything to *me*!

GEORGE. You didn't believe Hannock?

ELEANOR. Not for one second! That's why I left the room.

GEORGE. You'd better have stayed.

ELEANOR. Why?

GEORGE. Because he told the truth!

ELEANOR. How do you mean?

GEORGE. Everything he told me here, this afternoon, was true.

ELEANOR. Not when *I* was here! When I

was here, he was calling you a thief, and a cheat, and a liar !

GEORGE. He was right !

ELEANOR. No ! I don't understand you !

GEORGE. Your brother understands — and I've withdrawn my name from the nomination ! I'm giving up all the things it seemed to me I wanted most, — and *you*, most of all, Eleanor ! I thought I minded losing the others, but in comparison with what I feel now !!! *You loved me because I was honest !*

ELEANOR. Not *because*, — but, of course, if you were not *honest* —

GEORGE. Well, I'm not — I'm *not* !

ELEANOR. *You are ! I know you are !*

GEORGE. No ! I've lied and tricked and cheated in business, and I've got to pay for it !

ELEANOR. And all this you did *deliberately* ?

GEORGE. The only excuse I have, if you can call it an excuse, is that I didn't realize what I was doing! I did what others I had been taught to respect, to pattern on, did before me, — what others were doing around me! I accepted cheating for business diplomacy. I explained lying as the commercial code! I looked on stealing as legitimate borrowing! But I was a grown man, and in possession of my senses, and I had no real excuse! Eleanor, I've been a *business "crook,"* in a big way, perhaps, but still a *"crook,"* and I'm not good enough for you!

[A pause.]

ELEANOR. What are you going to do?

GEORGE. Give up all the positions I haven't any right to fill. Pay back interest I hadn't any right to get, and money I hadn't any right to use! Give up principal I gained on somebody

else's risk than my own! Begin all over again at the bottom, but on the *level*, and climb, only if I can do it on the square!

ELEANOR. I understand! I understand it all, now! You've done wrong?

GEORGE. Yes.

ELEANOR. Oh, so wrong, but you're owning all up, and *giving* all up!

GEORGE. Yes.

ELEANOR. You aren't being pressed to?

GEORGE. Of course I could fight it, but what's the use? *It's true!* Now *I realize that*, I can't own up fast enough! I can't begin over again soon enough! I can't eat or sleep or take a long breath even, till I'm on the level again with myself. Even at the price of *you*! But I'll make you believe in me again, Eleanor, — you'll see, if we live long enough!

ELEANOR. We don't have to live *any longer* for that.

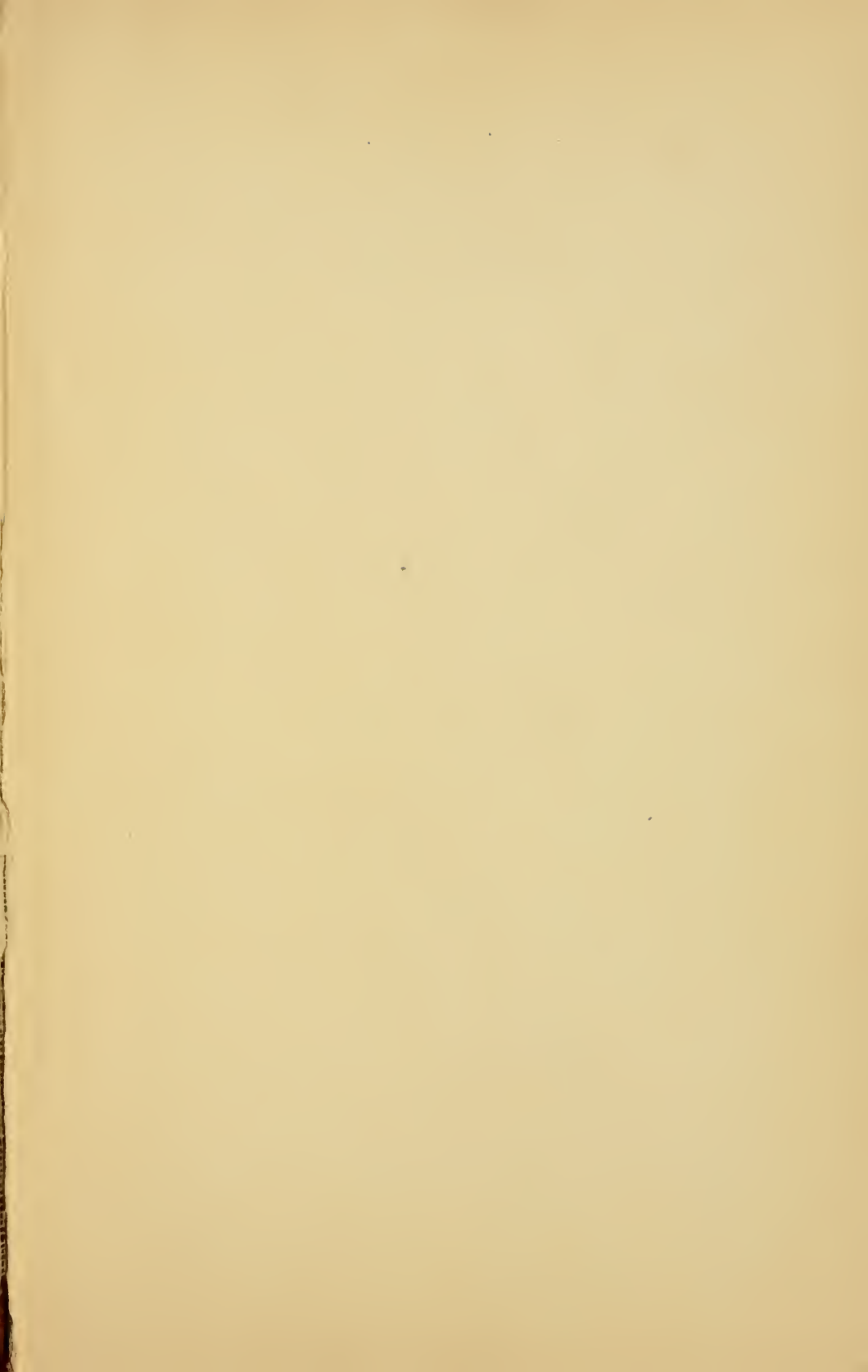
GEORGE. In what way?

ELEANOR. The man who has done wrong, and can own it up, — face life all over again empty-handed, emptying his own hands of his own accord, turn his back on everything he counted on and lived for, because it is the right thing to do, and because — leaving the world out of it — he *had to be honest with himself!* — that — George — is the man I look up to ten times more than the one who was *born* good and lived good because he never was tempted to enjoy the spoils of going wrong! It's the man whom it costs something to be good, — that's what makes real character! And to me — [*she goes up to him, and puts her hand on his arm*] you, here, *to-day*, are twice the man you were yesterday! You

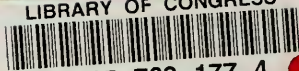
needed a test, though we didn't know it! And at the same time we found that out, you had to go through it; and thank God, your real self has triumphed! *To-day* you *are* the man I loved yesterday!

GEORGE. [*Looking away.*] Now, I know what those people mean who say a man gets all the *Hell* that's coming to him *in this world*, — [*looking at her*] — and *all the Heaven, too!*

THE CURTAIN FALLS



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